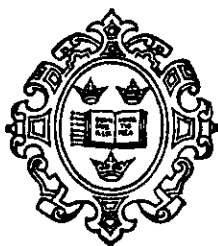


# *Amiran-Darejaniani*

A CYCLE OF  
MEDIEVAL GEORGIAN TALES  
TRADITIONALLY ASCRIBED  
TO MOSE KHONELI

*Translated by R. H. Stevenson*



OXFORD  
*At the Clarendon Press*

1958

THIS TRANSLATION  
IS DEDICATED TO  
MY MOTHER  
AND THE MEMORY OF  
MY FATHER

## PREFACE

THE reproaches to which one exposes oneself in offering an English rendering of *Amiran-Darejaniani* are greater by far than those which the temerity of translators commonly invites. The interpretation of a text in a twelfth-century vernacular can never be easy: when that text is embodied in a language little known to the wider world, moulded in a style of the most extreme and elliptical compression and abounding in every kind of scribal or editorial confusion; when, furthermore, there is a dearth of contemporary literature of the same order to which reference for the determination of word-values might hopefully be made—the task becomes hazardous indeed. And in fact I am only too well aware that on almost every page of my translation some word or passage lies open to challenge of one kind or another.

I have to express my thanks to the Trustees of the Marjory Wardrop Fund for their support of my venture from inception to publication; to Professor H. W. Bailey for that encouragement and assistance in all manner of perplexities which is never withheld from any enterprise in the field of oriental studies; and to Dr. E. D. Goy for much helpful discussion of problems of translation. My debt to Mr. A. Gugushvili is more difficult to set down in the coldness of print. Those students of Georgian literature and history who during the long years of his residence in England have had recourse to his learning will understand the generosity of spirit with which, during long hours of intricate discussion, he has brought illumination to one textual obscurity after another.

In conclusion I should like to echo, with vastly greater reason than had their author in penning them, the words in which Dr. Samuel Laing, the translator of the *Heimskringla*, wrote that all he could say for his work was that 'any translation is better than none; and others may be stimulated by it to enter into the same course of study, who may do more justice to a branch of literature scarcely known among us'.

R. H. S.

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- B.S.O.A.S.: *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies.*
- Z.D.M.G.: *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft.*
- Z.M.N.P.: *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnago Prosveshcheniya.*

## In the Notes:

<i>T'ani</i>	is transliterated t'	
<i>Zhani</i>	„	zh
<i>P'ari</i>	„	p'
<i>K'ani</i>	„	k'
<i>Ghani</i>	„	g
<i>Tshini</i>	„	č
<i>Tsani</i>	„	c
<i>Tsili</i>	„	ç
<i>Dchari</i>	„	č

# INTRODUCTION

## I

'C'EST un roman en prose écrit par Mosé de Khoni, en géorgien ancien, avec toute la grâce imaginable. Il a douze *portes*, ou contes, et s'appelle Daredjaniani, du nom d'Amiran, fils de Daredjan, héros fameux et général, natif de Baghdad, l'un de ceux dont les actions éclatantes et les guerres variées y sont racontées en détail. . . . Mosé, de Khoni . . . fut secrétaire de la glorieuse reine Thamar, dont la mémoire soit immortelle! fille de Giorgi III, autocrate de toute l'Ibérie,<sup>1</sup> et l'un des personnages les plus distingués de toute sa cour.'

In this note,<sup>2</sup> supplied by a Georgian prince to Marie-Félicité Brosset, greatest among those European scholars who have devoted themselves to Georgian studies, the world of learning received its first intimation of the existence of *Amiran-Darejaniani*. Some four years later, in 1838, having in the interim had the opportunity to study one of the manuscripts to which its embodiment was still confined, the French orientalist published an enthusiastic article,<sup>3</sup> which still provides the Western reader with his most serviceable introduction to this monument of early medieval civilization.

The earliest mention of the work in English would appear to be that which occurs in an article on Georgia, wherein the fruits of Brosset's researches are very evident, in the eighth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1856).<sup>4</sup> 'The Georgians', we are told, 'still hold in high estimation . . . *Darejaniani*.'

Brosset's paper had, however, failed to arouse any real interest in its subject: fifty years after its appearance an English writer could still produce an article on 'The Language and Literature of Georgia'<sup>5</sup> wherein *The Story of Amiran Darejan*—to translate literally—found no mention. In the last decades of the nineteenth century scholars in the land of its origin brought a certain amount of criticism to bear upon it, and in 1896 Dchidchinadze published

<sup>1</sup> The [eastern] *Iberia* of the ancient geographers: Caucasia.

<sup>2</sup> In Brosset's 'Notice littéraire sur quelques auteurs géorgiens', *Nouveau journal asiatique*, xiv, Paris, 1834, pp. 145-6.

<sup>3</sup> Brosset.

<sup>4</sup> x, p. 569.

<sup>5</sup> W. R. Morfill, in *The Academy*, xxxiv, 1888, pp. 39-40.

an edition.<sup>1</sup> It must be admitted that it could hardly have been less satisfactory. A handful of apparently random comments apart, it contains nothing in the nature of a critical apparatus, nor is there any account of the manuscripts on which it is founded.<sup>2</sup> The text itself bristles with every kind of syntactical solecism, aberrant form, and impossible orthography, while the punctuation can only be described as chaotic. Yet it was this unhappy publication that of necessity provided the basis of the translation which follows.<sup>3</sup>

Some manuscripts contain two extra chapters, 'The story of Jimsher, son of the Khazar King Dilar' and 'The story of Ar Mokla Dchabuki, son of Jimsher'. Only at the end of the latter is there a confused and perfunctory attempt to establish some sort of connexion with the 'Amiran' cycle. Brosset<sup>4</sup> refused to accord these a place in the original composition, while a present-day critic, Baramidze,<sup>5</sup> regards them, together with a third, 'The Story of Gurgen, son of King Jizi', which was unknown to Brosset and unpublished by Dchidchinadze, as productions of the eighteenth century. And indeed, even if a telescope did not make an appearance in one of these stories,<sup>6</sup> one would still feel confident in giving them a fairly recent dating.

About 1681 a metrical version of our cycle of tales was composed by the brothers Sulkhan and Begtabeg Taniashvili:<sup>7</sup> it was published by G. Jakobia in 1941.<sup>8</sup>

A few passages from *Amiran-Darejaniani* have at one time or another been put into Russian,<sup>9</sup> but it has never previously been translated into any language in its entirety.

## 2

Few heroes of story-telling can have had a history longer or more involved than that of Amiran. Nutsubidze<sup>10</sup> considers him to have been in origin the tribal god of the 'Amarantoi'—a hypothetical people to whom, so certain authorities hold, Apollonius Rhodius

<sup>1</sup> Dchidchinadze.

<sup>2</sup> Reference may be made here to the reprint of an article in the Georgian periodical *Moambe*, by E. Taqaishvili, a copy of which is in the Wardrop Collection in the Bodleian Library. ['A Few Remarks on the Manuscripts of *Amiran-Darejaniani*.']

<sup>3</sup> The edition published in 1939 by S. Kakabadze has not been available. There has been a further publication of selections in *Dzveli k'art'uli literaturis k'restomat'ia*, ii, ed. by S. Qubaneishvili, Tiflis, 1949.

<sup>4</sup> Brosset, col. 16.

<sup>5</sup> Baramidze, p. 211.

<sup>6</sup> Dchidchinadze, p. 295.

<sup>7</sup> Kekelidze, pp. 192-5; Blake, p. 32.

<sup>8</sup> Baramidze, loc. cit.

<sup>9</sup> e.g. in Dondua, pp. 98-109.

<sup>10</sup> Nutsubidze, p. 53.

is referring when he speaks of the 'Amarantine mountains' and the 'Amarantine Phasis' in the land of Colchis<sup>1</sup>—and also points out that Pauly-Wissowa gives *Amaranus* as one of the names of Jupiter.<sup>2</sup> The identification made by Olrik<sup>3</sup> and by Karst<sup>4</sup> with the *Ahriman* of Zoroastrian demonology seems more plausible, but remains no more than a conjecture.

Whatever his etymological associations, however, the original Amiran is in fact none other than that primeval Caucasian titan,<sup>5</sup> with apparent affinities with fettered gods and demigods as far afield as the Tatar lands<sup>6</sup> and Scandinavia,<sup>7</sup> who figures in Armenian legend under the name of the historical Artavazd,<sup>8</sup> son of King Artaxes (A.D. 88–129), as well as under that of Mher;<sup>9</sup> who appears in Iranian folk-tale as Zôhak;<sup>10</sup> and who is also to be met with under various names in the mythology of, among others, the Abkhaz,<sup>11</sup> the Cherkess,<sup>12</sup> and the Kabards<sup>13</sup>—but whose most

<sup>1</sup> *Argonautica*, ii, line 399; iii, line 1220. Cf. also Stephanus Byzantinus, *Ethnikon* (ed. A. Westermann, Leipzig, 1839, p. 37): Ἀμαραντοὶ ὄφρυόνων, Κολχικὸν ἔθνος, ἀφ' ὧν ὁ Φάσις ρεῖ . . . Also Ctesias (Göttingen, 1823, p. 283): Ὅτι δὲ τὰ Ἀμαραντὰ ὄρη ἐστὶ Κόλχων . . . See further *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, i, Stuttgart, 1894, col. 1728, where it is suggested that ἀμαραντὰ ὄρη may signify 'mountains covered with evergreens'. The river 'Phasis' is the modern Rion.

<sup>2</sup> *Real-Encyclopädie*, col. 1729.

<sup>3</sup> Olrik, *Myterne*, p. 562.

<sup>4</sup> Karst, *Mythologie*, p. 147.

<sup>5</sup> L. Preller, *Griechische Mythologie*, 4th ed., i, Berlin, 1894, p. 101, note, M. Anholm, 'Den bundne Jætte i Kavkasus', *Danske Studier*, 1904; Olrik, *Udspring*; Karst, *Mythologie*, pp. 135–51.

<sup>6</sup> A. Schiefner, *Heldensagen der minussinschen Tataren*, St. Petersburg, 1859, pp. 130–1.

<sup>7</sup> See note A, p. 232.

<sup>8</sup> Moses of Chorene, *Histoire d'Arménie*, transl. by Le Vaillant de Florival, i, Paris, 1841, p. 293; E. Dulaurier ('Les Chants populaires de l'Arménie', *Revue des Deux Mondes*, xiv, 1852, pp. 253–4) regards this Armenian story as the basis of the thinly christianized variant of the myth found in Georgia. This view is also expressed by Spiegel, p. 216, note. On Artavazd see further M. H. Ananikian, *Armenian Mythology*, London, 1925, pp. 98–99.

<sup>9</sup> To be identified with the Iranian *Mithra*: Ananikian, pp. 33–34. On Artavazd and Mher see B. Chalatianz, 'Die armenische Heldensage', *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde*, xii, 1902, p. 401.

<sup>10</sup> Mannhardt and MacCulloch, locc. cit. [Note A, p. 232.]

<sup>11</sup> Bleichsteiner, p. 12; Karst, *Mythologie*, p. 135.

<sup>12</sup> Brosset, *Collections d'historiens arméniens*, ii, St. Petersburg, 1876, p. 595; Olrik, 'Goter og Tjerkesser . . .', *Danske Studier*, 1914.

<sup>13</sup> E. Lalayantz, 'Les Anciens Chants . . . de l'Arménie', *Revue des traditions populaires*, xi, 1896, p. 137; R. Lasch, 'Die Ursache und Bedeutung der Erdbeben im Volksglauben und Volksbrauch', *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, v, 1902, pp. 245–6; Olrik, *Myterne*, pp. 559–60.

renowned embodiment is, of course, to be found in the figure of Prometheus.<sup>1</sup>

This 'Promethean' Amiran is the hero of numerous Georgian<sup>2</sup> and Ossetian<sup>3</sup> tales, wherein his fetters punish the impiety which provoked him to a trial of strength with Christ. There also exists, however, among these peoples another cycle of 'Amiran' legends which seems to lack any kind of organic connexion with the Promethean stories. It may be surmised that at some period which we cannot hope to determine the popular imagination in these communities laid hold of a familiar name as a focus for an impulse towards story-telling of an order quite foreign to the original character of its bearer.

It is with this 'second' Amiran alone that the hero of our *Amiran-Darejaniani* has any real connexion.

## 3

The nature and extent of this connexion are far from clear. No major correspondences are discernible between the stories comprised in *Amiran-Darejaniani* and the popular tales, and the most concrete common element is to be found in certain of the names. It is difficult, however, to establish real identities among their bearers. Thus while in the tales Badri, Usib,<sup>4</sup> and Amiran appear as brothers, in what constitutes in fact the first story in the literary work ('The Story of Badri Iamanisdze', 'The Story of Nosar Nisreli', and 'The Story of Amiran Darejanisdze') they are not only quite unrelated but are not even all figures of the same type, Usib

<sup>1</sup> It may be appropriate to refer here to the evidence for the Caucasian origin of the Pelasgians assembled by G. Thomson, *Studies in Ancient Greek Society*, 2nd ed., London, 1954, pp. 171-6 and 276-8; and to the argument that the cults of Athene, Hephaistos, Hermes, and Artemis Brauronia were introduced into Greece by this people; pp. 257-68 and 276-80.

<sup>2</sup> Dulaurier, op. cit.; 'Das Neujahrsfest im Gouvernement Stawropol', *Archiv für wissenschaftliche Kunde von Rußland*, xv, 1856, p. 146; C. Hahn, *Aus dem Kaukasus*, Leipzig, 1892, pp. 247-8; Krohn, op. cit., pp. 146-54; Bleichsteiner, p. 12; Nutschidze, pp. 36-53; Karst, *Mythologie*, pp. 136-44; Uru-shadze, pp. 172-3. For further references, see article 'Amirani', *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopedia*, 2nd ed., ii, 1950, p. 279.

<sup>3</sup> C. Bunsen, *Outlines . . . of Universal History . . .*, ii, London, 1854, p. 27 n.; F. Welcker, *Griechische Götterlehre*, i, Göttingen, 1857, p. 761; Hübschmann, p. 569; Lalayantz, op. cit., pp. 137-8; Karst, *Mythologie*, pp. 144-5.

<sup>4</sup> See note B, p. 232.

not being, one or two inconsistencies of conduct apart, a hero in any sense of the term. Again, in the tales Baqbaq Devi meets his death at the hands of Amiran, but in the literary work at those of Nosar<sup>1</sup>—in an entirely different context. The martial adventures of Ambri Arabi in *Amiran-Darejaniani* have no flavour of folk-tale about them: Savarsamidze, in the written work the first among Amiran's retainers and the narrator of his lord's adventures, makes in the tales but a brief and, it may be thought, somewhat suspect appearance.<sup>2</sup> Much the same may be said of Nosar.<sup>3</sup>

The Badri-Nosar-Amiran story referred to above houses within its perfunctory structure a mass of adventures in their essence self-contained. The opening is abrupt, and we are plunged into the narrative with a ballad-like directness. It is interesting to observe that the writer seems to be sensible of the lack of introductory matter. When at the end of the Prologue the Indian king commands him to begin his recital of Amiran's adventures with this story, Savarsamidze remarks that it comes 'in the middle'.<sup>4</sup> One is tempted to speculate whether, while the author would have liked to begin with some account of Amiran's parentage and early years, he felt the traditional material on this head on the one hand to be too primitive in character<sup>5</sup> to be utilized, and on the other too firmly entrenched in the popular consciousness to be set aside in favour of a history drawn from his own imagination.

In the longest and most elaborate of the popular tales an antelope with golden horns leads Amiran and his brothers Badri and Usib to a tower wherein they find a document which impels them to set out to find and kill the Devi Baqbaq.<sup>6</sup> After Amiran has killed him three worms wriggle out of his three severed heads,<sup>7</sup> which later confront the companions in the shape of dragons; one white, one red, and one black. Amiran determines to engage the black himself, and allocates to the other two the white and the red. In fact, after he himself has killed these latter, he is swallowed by the

<sup>1</sup> See p. 37.

<sup>2</sup> Nutsbidze, pp. 155, 237 (note *Nisreli*).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> In the popular tales the circumstances of Amiran's birth are given in many different versions. The most usual has him spring from an illicit union between Sul-Kalmakhi, father by his lawful wife of Badri and Usib, and Dali or Darejan, apparently originally conceived of as a goddess of the wild. In one version, however, Darejan figures as Sul-Kalmakhi's wife. Bleichsteiner, p. 13; Nutsbidze, pp. 75-98; Urushadze, p. 167.

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix B.

<sup>7</sup> Two-, three-, and seven-headed divs are known to Armenian folk-lore. Abeghian, p. 111.

black, out of whose belly he proceeds to cut his way with a knife which he draws from his pocket.<sup>1</sup>

In the Prologue to the literary work pursuit of an antelope with golden horns brings the Indian king to a building inside which he finds an inscription. In the Badri-Nosar-Amiran story which follows, Amiran, Badri, and Usib all figure. More than this, Amiran, accompanied by two companions, one of whom is Usib, has precisely the same adventure, even down to the colour-details, with the three dragons—the only trifling difference being that it is from his boot that he draws his knife.<sup>2</sup> There is, however, no suggestion here of any connexion between the dragons and Baqbaq, who at this juncture is still alive.

In this same story a giant bird swoops down on Usib and two companions, to be killed by Nosar:<sup>3</sup> later Amiran is carried up to the ramparts of a castle clinging to the legs of another such monstrous creature.<sup>4</sup> These two stories do not seem to have any counterparts in Georgian folk-tale, but the neighbouring Ossetes have a legend in which 'Musyrbi' is carried up into the sky by a huge bird, which is killed by 'Amran' after he has contrived to get carried up as well.<sup>5</sup>

Correspondences such as these suffice to establish the fact of a relationship between the corpus of 'Amiran' folk-lore and *Amiran-Darejaniani*. The nature of this relationship, however, while it has long been in dispute, has generally been treated as a question subsidiary to another: Is the literary work an essentially Georgian production, or is it based on matter originally Persian?

Janashvili, who looked on it as the allegorical celebration of the Georgian national struggle waged under David II, Dimitri I, Giorgi III, and Tamar against the Islamic powers, affirmed the view that it was native to Georgia.<sup>6</sup> Dchidchinadze was of the

<sup>1</sup> This episode occurs also in the Ossetian stories of Amiran: Miller, pp. 62-63; Hübschmann, p. 568.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 34. This episode of the knife recurs in a modified form in the Story of the Talismans. See p. 119.

<sup>3</sup> See pp. 28-29.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 37.

<sup>5</sup> Miller, pp. 64-69; Bleichsteiner, pp. 23-24. On giant birds, see E. W. West, *Pahlavi Texts*, i, Oxford, 1880, p. 47; Marr, 'Ossetica-Japhetica', *Bulletin de l'Académie des Sciences*, 6th series, xii, 1918, pp. 2069-100. On this story, see 2079-82; and W. B. Henning, 'Two Manichaean Magical Texts', *B.S.O.A.S.*, xii, 1947, where further references will be found.

<sup>6</sup> *Mose Khoneli da misi Amiran-Darejaniani* ['M. K. and his A. D.'], Tiflis, 1895.



same opinion.<sup>1</sup> By the turn of the century, however, few were of this mind. Gren was disposed to see in the cycle an elaboration of material originally Persian,<sup>2</sup> and Khakhanov had a somewhat similar theory, surmising that the tales came by word of mouth from Persia and were worked up into literary form by 'Khoneli'.<sup>3</sup> Marr's arguments from internal evidence in favour of regarding the work as a translation pure and simple will be discussed below. Here it will suffice to note that he drew attention to the statement in a Georgian anti-Muslim polemic written, probably in the sixteenth century, by a certain Prince Bagrat, *On the religion of the godless Ismailians*, that *Amiran-Darejaniani* was a translation of part of a book 'which the Saracens call Qisai Hamza'.<sup>4</sup>

Marr was followed in his views by Kekelidze, who went so far as to assert in categorical terms that the popular tales were derived from the literary work.<sup>5</sup> The arguments of these two savants were sufficient to induce R. P. Blake, the most distinguished Georgianist in the English-speaking world in the last generation, to declare roundly of *Amiran-Darejaniani*, 'There is no doubt whatsoever that this document is, if not a word for word translation, at any rate an adaptation of a Persian original.'<sup>6</sup>

In more recent years, however, the general trend of criticism, as exemplified in the writings of such scholars as Karst,<sup>7</sup> Ingorokva,<sup>8</sup> Dondua,<sup>9</sup> Chkhotua,<sup>10</sup> Nutsbidze,<sup>11</sup> and Baramidze,<sup>12</sup> has been to follow Bleichsteiner<sup>13</sup> in reverting to the old view of our cycle as being an essentially Georgian production, and to look upon the 'Amiran' tales current among the Georgian and neighbouring peoples in modern times not as being in the first place derived

<sup>1</sup> *K'art'uli mcerloba met'ormete saukuneshi* ['Georgian literature in the twelfth century'], pp. 11-13.

<sup>2</sup> 'Gruzinskaya povest ob Amiran', *Z.M.N.P.*, Feb. 1895.

<sup>3</sup> *Ocherki po istorii gruzinskoy slovesnosti*, ii, Moscow, 1897, p. 154-69.

<sup>4</sup> 'Iz knigi Tsarevicha Bagrata . . .', *Izvestiya Imperatorskoy Akademii Nauk*, 5th series, 1899, x, p. 244; Kekelidze, p. 54; Dondua, pp. 92-93; Baramidze, p. 209.

<sup>5</sup> Kekelidze, pp. 53-54, 62.

<sup>6</sup> Blake, p. 32. Cf. also *Der grosse Brockhaus*, vii, 1930, p. 196; *Enciclopedia italiana*, xvi, 1932, p. 644; *Literaturnyaya Entsiklopediya*, iii, 1930, col. 47; *Malaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya*, 2nd ed., iii, 1935, col. 521.

<sup>7</sup> Karst, *Littérature*, p. 125 (an Iranian source is still posited here); *Mythologie*, pp. 136-51.

<sup>8</sup> Ingorokva, p. xxiii.

<sup>9</sup> Dondua, pp. 91-110.

<sup>11</sup> Nutsbidze, pp. 62-68.

<sup>13</sup> Bleichsteiner, pp. 12-13, 21-24.

<sup>10</sup> Chkhotua, pp. 172-6.

<sup>12</sup> Baramidze, pp. 209-10.

from the literary work—although in the course of centuries they may well have undergone modification under its influence—but rather as representing in some measure the basic material from which it was in part fashioned.

The theory of translation is discussed below from the standpoint of comparative literature. Here it will be sufficient to observe that the unsupported assertion of a sixteenth-century religious controversialist must surely always have seemed a singularly inadequate authority in respect of a secular work composed some four or five centuries earlier. Particularly at a period when a calculating apostasy was not uncommon, a zealous Georgian Christian might well find the Persian décor of *Amiran-Darejaniani* obnoxious, and be eager to represent the work as a pernicious alien import: a situation may have existed somewhat analogous to that obtaining at a later period in the West, where the literatures of France and Italy tended, inasmuch as they reflected the cultures of Catholic societies, to be looked upon with disfavour by extreme Protestant opinion. And indeed we are now told that research has established that *Qisai Hamza* had nothing in common with our cycle.<sup>1</sup>

It must always be borne in mind that from the point of view of folk-lore Caucasia is to be looked upon as constituting in large measure an outpost of the Iranian world, and that thus almost any motif with the stamp of a popular origin found in a work composed in the former region could quite possibly have come from the common Caucaso-Iranian stock through a Persian channel. Examples in our text are the stories of the sleeping hero carried off by the div (devi)<sup>2</sup> and the king who sends an envoy to obtain three 'Star' princesses for his sons.<sup>3</sup> Each of these may quite well have been drawn from the *Shāhnāma* of Firdausi.<sup>4</sup>

What brings us to the heart of the matter, however, is the fact that Firdausi feels it necessary to make a kind of half-apology for introducing into his work such a naïve old tale as that of the div Akwān's carrying-off of Rustam.<sup>5</sup>

As will be sufficiently clear from what is said below, nothing could indeed be more probable in itself than a twelfth-century Georgian translation from the Persian; but it is surely almost unthinkable that any Persian writer could have worked into his

<sup>1</sup> Baramidze, p. 209.

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 25, 29-30.

<sup>3</sup> See pp. 71-72.

<sup>4</sup> *Shāhnāma* (W), iii, p. 276; i, pp. 177-84.

<sup>5</sup> *Shāhnāma* (W), iii, p. 273. Cf. Spiegel, p. 637.

narrative such a series of—as they stand—almost meaningless fragments of folk-tale as the episodes of the man with two serpents on a hill-top<sup>1</sup> and the cyclops with whom Savarsamidze has combat<sup>2</sup> would appear in origin to have been.

It is true that the difficulty of accounting for the presence of these fragments is not entirely dissipated by the hypothesis that *Amiran-Darejaniani* first came into being among a people less sophisticated in literary taste than the Persians; but it becomes somewhat less daunting. And we are at least freed from the necessity of endorsing the view which their theory of the origin of the cycle imposes upon such writers as Marr and Kekelidze: that the popular imagination among the Georgians, Ossetes, and others seized upon certain episodes in a literary work of foreign antecedents as a basis for elaborations of its own.<sup>3</sup> Even if it might be argued that the fact that the episodes in question may have been garnered from the common corpus of Caucaso-Iranian folk-lore in the first instance could facilitate this process, it is exceedingly hard to look with any sympathy on this view.

There may well have been considerable interplay over the centuries between the literary work, in continual modification from manuscript to manuscript, and the popular tradition; and Baramidze may indeed have much justification for the suggestion that the latter has been so corrupted by the influence of the former as virtually to have lost all integrity<sup>4</sup>—but the Marr-Kekelidze theory seems to require us to invert the natural order of things at every turn. Thus, for example, in the popular narratives Badri, Usib, and Amiran appear in the three-brother formula so familiar in folk-tale; while in our text they have no other connexion with each other than that supplied by the development of the story. It would seem much easier to suppose that an old folk-tale formula was altered by the author of *Amiran-Darejaniani* for his own purposes than that what had been in his work a purely fortuitous interconnexion was moulded in the mouths of the people into a stereotype of popular story-telling.

The etymology of the name *Usib* is uncertain,<sup>5</sup> but it is generally

<sup>1</sup> See p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 34.

<sup>3</sup> Kekelidze, pp. 53, 62.

<sup>4</sup> Baramidze, pp. 209–10.

<sup>5</sup> Bleichsteiner, p. 13, thinks it is probably the Arabic *Yussuf*: Karst, *Mythologie*, p. 137, turns to the Assyrian *ashipu*, 'magician', and *Biur-asp*, 'the lord of dragons' in Armeno-Persian mythology, and goes on to find a Greek correspondence in *Perseus*.

agreed that *Badri* is derived from the Arabic *badr* 'the full moon'.<sup>1</sup> If this identification is warranted, Nutsubidze may well be right in looking upon its bearer as in origin a lunar deity.<sup>2</sup> If this is so, we may feel safe in assuming that two at least of our triad—Amiran and Badri—are the bearers of names derived from ancient Caucasian myth. It would seem more probable that these somehow became engrafted into a later cycle of folk-tales than that the Georgian translator of a collection of Persian stories chose them arbitrarily for two of his personages.

In none of the subsequent stories is the popular element so marked as it is in the first. Instead of appearing almost 'in the raw', it is, when present, to some extent formalized and assimilated to the tone of chivalrous narrative. In the second story and—save for the figure of a dragon-riding devi—the last, the magical and the fabulous are completely absent. In these subsequent stories, moreover, the innumerable battles and adventures take their place within a tolerably firm narrative design; and there is in general much less sense of random compilation. It is to be noted here that in respect of its central episode, the discovery of the building containing the portraits and the inscription, the Prologue looks forward specifically to the Badri-Nosar-Amiran story; and in some sense it must be regarded as properly appertaining exclusively thereto. The fact that one of the elements in the 'Baqbaq' folk-tale discussed above, that of the deer with golden horns, makes an appearance in the Prologue tells in the same sense. Savarsamidze's exchanges with the Indian king at the close of the Prologue, referred to above, on the question of where he is to begin his recital may be of significance in this connexion. It might appear that the author of *Amiran-Darejaniani* was endeavouring to adapt the opening of the traditional tale of Amiran to serve a wider purpose.

Thus it would seem not at all improbable that the Prologue and the first (Badri-Nosar-Amiran) story together contain the kernel of our cycle: we may go even farther and suggest that the greater part of this kernel is to be found more particularly in that portion of the narrative which comes after the heading 'The story of

<sup>1</sup> Bleichsteiner, loc. cit.; Karst, *Mythologie*, pp. 137-8. Karst suggests an identification with the Greek *Pandora*, who, it may be remembered, was associated with Prometheus.

<sup>2</sup> Nutsubidze, p. 234.

Amiran Darejanisdze', where the encounter with the dragons<sup>1</sup> and the slaying of Baqbaq<sup>2</sup> both occur.

When we turn from those scenes in *Amiran-Darejaniani* wherein the predominant influence is clearly that of folk-tale to those which may be supposed to consist in large measure of 'original' work—in general those of combat between heroes, feasting, displays of royal generosity, &c.—we still find certain elements with the flavour of oral tradition about them. In the main these elements consist of recurring formulas—they circled round each other, shouted, and charged—minstrels sang and tumblers performed—the clarions and tabors were sounded—the king took his seat and placed his barons round about him—X said, 'Here we need a guard'; Y was appointed; great hosts came, and he slaughtered large numbers—reminiscent of the refrains of Western balladry. It can only be supposed that in such formulas as these we have the traces of a vanished minstrelsy.<sup>3</sup>

## 4

We are without certain knowledge either of the authorship of our cycle or of the manner of its composition. Of the surviving manuscripts none dates back beyond the seventeenth century.<sup>4</sup> The earliest piece of evidence with a bearing on the date of the work is a statement in the Georgian Chronicle that in 1185 a gathering of the notables of the land had the object of finding for Queen Tamar a husband who would be to her 'as was Amiran to Khuareshan . . . as was Mze Dchabuki to the Sun [sc. the princess, radiant as the sun] of the Khazars'.<sup>5</sup>

This apparent reference to two of the tales comprising our *Amiran-Darejaniani* cannot of course be held to prove that the entire corpus had taken shape by 1196, the date by which the section of the *History of Tamar* in which it occurs was completed;<sup>6</sup> that the two were then current in the form in which they appear in our text; or even that they were necessarily thought of as coming

<sup>1</sup> See p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 37.

<sup>3</sup> It may be observed that the occurrence of certain of these formulas in the early part of the Georgian Chronicle, particularly in the narration of the exploits of King Vakhtang Gurgasiani, may more naturally be accounted for by the supposition that they were drawn from this minstrelsy than by Kekelidze's hypothesis (Kekelidze, pp. 56-61) that the chroniclers lifted them from *Amiran-Darejaniani*.

<sup>4</sup> Kekelidze, p. 44.

<sup>5</sup> *Chronicle*, p. 284.

<sup>6</sup> Kekelidze, p. 56; Blake, p. 32.

from the same pen—though the juxtaposition perhaps makes this fair to suppose. All that we can say with tolerable certainty is that by the year 1196 two of the stories in our cycle, neither of which was, according to the argument set out above, likely to have been the first to have been composed, were apparently so generally familiar in some form that references to them could assume an almost proverbial character.

In the eulogistic sequence of odes *T'amariani* composed in honour of Queen Tamar by Chakhrukhadze,<sup>1</sup> David Soslan, the queen's second husband, is declared to be 'mighty as Nosar',<sup>2</sup> and 'a very Badri with the sword'.<sup>3</sup> For these passages a *terminus ad quem* is furnished by the death of David in 1207.

The caveats entered in the case of the annalist's similes naturally apply here also. Furthermore, Chakhrukhadze's references are merely to personages, not to specific and identifiable stories. The presumption, too, that the names must have been immediately familiar to his first readers is somewhat less strong than in the case of those mentioned in the Chronicle, inasmuch as the panegyrist has no hesitation in dragging in the most recondite allusions for the sake of rhyme-patterns of the most inordinately exigent character. All in all, however, the cumulative effect of these three passages is to suggest fairly strongly that by the year 1207 three at least of the stories in our *Amiran-Darejaniani* had been composed.

There is no other evidence of real value for dating. In the last quatrain in Rustaveli's 'The Man of the Panther-skin' we read, 'Mose Khoneli [sc. of the village of Khoni, in the province of Imereti] sang the praises of Amiran Darejanisdze'<sup>4</sup>—but not only is the date of Rustaveli's poem itself uncertain, though, according to Ingorokva, it is probably to be placed between 1184 and 1207,<sup>5</sup> but the Epilogue in which this statement occurs may well have been added by a later hand.<sup>6</sup> The real significance of the line is to have furnished tradition with a 'canonical' authorship. Modern Georgian scholars, however, write confidently of 'Mose Khoneli',<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Text in Marr, Russian translation by Nutsubidze, Tiflis, 1942. Kekelidze, pp. 143-54; Blake, pp. 29, 35; Karst, *Littérature*, pp. 122-3; Ingorokva, pp. xx, xxiii; Baramidze, pp. 240-57.

<sup>2</sup> Marr, no. x, stanza 32.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., no. xii, stanza 35.

<sup>4</sup> R 1576.

<sup>5</sup> Ingorokva, p. xxvii.

<sup>6</sup> Marr, *Vstupitelnyya i zakliuchitelnyya strofy Vityazya v Barsvoy Kozhe*, St. Petersburg, 1910, pp. 6, 10, 42-45, 53-54. Kekelidze, p. 89.

<sup>7</sup> e.g. Ingorokva, p. xxiii; Chkhotua, p. 173; Nutsubidze, pp. 26-27; Baramidze, pp. 202, 210.

and it will be convenient to follow their example, although it must be clearly understood that the name is used merely as a designation for a writer—or writers—of whom, save for the legend enshrined in the passage quoted at the beginning of this Introduction, we really know nothing.

If our argument that the names of some of the characters in *Amiran-Darejaniani* must have been generally familiar by the closing decades of the twelfth century is well founded, it would seem a legitimate inference that the work, or at least a nucleus thereof, must then have been in existence for at least a generation, and probably longer. The relatively archaic character of the language accords well with this hypothesis. Certain affinities with the idiom of ecclesiastical literature suggest that the author lacked more appropriate exemplars, such as would almost certainly have been available by the time of Tamar's accession (1184). The contrast with the sophistication and relative colloquialism of Rustaveli's style is enormous.

It may be submitted that the latter half of the reign of David II, the Builder (1089-1125), the architect of the medieval Georgian kingdom, accords with the scanty indications of the probable date of our cycle.<sup>1</sup> The superb vigour and the martial achievements of that age would seem to be in harmony with the spirit which informs it.

The comparatively few names in *Amiran-Darejaniani* of peoples, lands, and cities known to history seem to reflect obscurely an epoch some two or three hundred years prior to that at which it was composed: a world in which the Abbasid Caliphate of Baghdad is at its zenith, in which Basra, which began to decline in importance towards the end of the ninth century, is a leading commercial centre, and in which the ruler of the Khazars, a people whose power has generally been held to have been virtually extinguished by the raid of Sviatoslav, lord of the Kievan Russians, in 965, is a monarch to mention in the same breath as those of Greece and China.<sup>2</sup>

Names of countries such as Yemen or Persia have, however, no more historical or geographical validity than such others as 'the Kingdom of the Seas' or 'the Land of the Stars'. The only two places to have some suggestion of actuality about them are Baghdad and Basra.

<sup>1</sup> See note C, p. 232.

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 66-67.

## 5

The arguments which Marr adduced from internal evidence in favour of Khoneli's work's having been derived from a Persian original<sup>1</sup> were chiefly these: it is the Persian-speaking face of the *Two-Faced Man* that Nosar's company understand;<sup>2</sup> Amiran and his followers are represented as being Persians and liegemen of the Caliph of Baghdad, and in the *Story of the Talismans* are described by the astrologer as Persians;<sup>3</sup> war is waged against Khazars, Chinese, Turks, and others, but we never hear of fighting against Persians: Muslim-wise, Amiran marries more than one wife;<sup>4</sup> many of the names of persons—here Marr indulges unnecessarily in some wild etymologies—have a Persian basis.

All this is surely as irrelevant as it is obvious. That Amiran is of Baghdad and that the general setting is nominally Persian is patent; but no one has ever seriously suggested that an Arabic or an Indian original should be postulated for 'The Man of the Panther-skin' on the ground that its chief actors are supposed to be of those lands; and today—even in the face of a plain statement in the Prologue that what follows is 'a Persian tale'<sup>5</sup>—it is generally allowed to be a native Georgian production. The argument from the plurality of Amiran's marriages seems, it may be observed, doubly misconceived. Even if we were required to think of him as polygamous, that would merely be of a piece with the Persian setting; but in fact the several marriages would appear much rather to furnish yet one more illustration of the essentially self-contained character of each of the stories in our text. On each occasion Amiran seems to go to his bridal in the guise of a single man.

For the rest, argumentation of this kind seems to betray a certain lack of understanding of the very nature of medieval romance. In the world of the twelfth century the modern antithesis of 'original work' and 'translation' is almost without meaning. Stories such as those of Alexander, Barlaam and Josaphat, and Tristan and Iseult are rehandled time and again in one European language after another. It would seem, furthermore, that tales of

<sup>1</sup> 'Persidskaya natsionalnaya tendentsiya v gruzinskom roman *Amiran-Darejaniani*', *Z.M.N.P.*, 1895, June, pp. 352-65; Oct., pp. 324-8. Quoted in Kekelidze, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 28.

<sup>4</sup> See pp. 109, 167, 221.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 96.

<sup>5</sup> R 16.



wonder and romance thrive best when placed in a far country. Thus, be their 'sources' what they may, in the West the English author of *Beowulf* sets the exploits of his hero in Denmark and Sweden, and in the East the Persian Nizāmī puts his lovers Leila and Majnun among the Bedouin. Khoneli's 'Persia' and 'Baghdad' are of a piece with the 'Britain' and 'Winchester' of the Arthurian romances of such writers as Chrétien de Troyes. Chrétien found inspiration in the *matière de Bretagne*, which made its way into the world through the *Historia Regum Britanniae* of Geoffrey of Monmouth; but no one denies the French romancer the standing of a creative artist. No more should it be denied to Khoneli.

## 6

The view advanced above that *Amiran-Darejaniani* is in all essentials a work native to Georgia is not to be understood as implying a denial that any elements ultimately Persian went to its composition. Apart from a sufficiently explicit décor, the influence of the literature of the southern neighbour might well be expected on general grounds. Baseless as it almost certainly is, the claim in the Prologue to 'The Man of the Panther-skin'<sup>1</sup> that the poem that follows is from the Persian may be regarded as an indication of the prestige of the literature of Iran. Since the eleventh century, furthermore, the stream of translation from Persian into Georgian had attained considerable volume.<sup>2</sup> To turn to our text itself, the size of the Persian element in Khoneli's vocabulary is significant.

One specific Persian influence may be discerned with a fair degree of certainty in *Amiran-Darejaniani*: that of the *Shāhnāma*. The question of its real extent and the form in which it exerted itself is, however, a difficult one. Firdausi's work had been given to the world a century or more before that of Khoneli; and the part of it to which the latter is most akin, the narration of the exploits of Rustam, had, according to tradition, appeared in a Georgian version, the *Rostomiani*, at a date prior to the accession of Tamar.<sup>3</sup> Two poets of the Tamaran age, the author of the *Abdulmesia* odes,

<sup>1</sup> The Prologue was, of course, written at a time later, possibly much later, than that from which we have seen reason to suppose *Amiran-Darejaniani* to date; and much translation of Persian romantic literature, notably of Nizāmī's *Khosro o-Shirin* and *Leila o-Majnun* and of the *Vīs o-Rāmin* of Fakhrud-din Gurgāni, had been done in the interim. See Ingorokva, p. xxi.

<sup>2</sup> Ingorokva, p. xix.

<sup>3</sup> Karst, *Littérature*, p. 138; Ingorokva, p. xxi.

traditionally a certain Shavteli, and Chakhrukhadze, to whose *T'amariani* reference has already been made, mention Firdausi's heroes Rustam,<sup>1</sup> Zāl,<sup>2</sup> Sām,<sup>3</sup> Salm,<sup>4</sup> and Tur<sup>5</sup> as figures generally familiar. There is thus no difficulty in supposing the more legendary portions of the *Shāhnāma* to have been known—perhaps in the Georgian of the lost *Rostomiani*—to Khoneli. And indeed a number of incidents and many phrases in *Amiran-Darejaniani* find parallels in the Persian epic. It may, however, be suggested that the general affinity of atmosphere is most naturally to be accounted for by the broad similarity in subject-matter between the Georgian work and the more fabulous parts of the Persian, and to their analogous relationships to that common body of Caucaso-Iranian folk-lore already discussed. Furthermore, while there is certainly much general resemblance between various scenes—as for example between Firdausi's battle between Sikandar and Fur<sup>6</sup> and any of the set combat pieces in Khoneli's stories—such correspondences in the Georgian text as are sufficiently sharply defined to suggest possible borrowings are for the most part of very minor importance. There is no question of Khoneli's having been indebted to Firdausi for any far-reaching conception.

All that we can say on this topic with any confidence is that, utterly lacking—as indeed, given its formal subject-matter, it must necessarily be—as *Amiran-Darejaniani* is in the proud sense of nationality informing the *Shāhnāma*, the latter is the work to which it can most readily be likened.

## 7

A tentative reconstruction of the background to our cycle and of its genesis may now be ventured on. Early in the twelfth century a Georgian romancer, whom, following tradition, we may call Mose Khoneli, lays hands on such episodes in current folk-tale concerning the 'post-Promethean' Amiran as he deems suitable for his purpose, and proceeds to fit them, with scant regard for such organic interconnexions as they may originally have possessed, and along with much of his own invention, into the rather casual framework of the Prologue and the Badri-Nosar-Amiran story. The greater part of this traditional material is put into the

<sup>1</sup> Marr, no. 15, stanza 4; no. 31, stanza 4; no. xii, stanza 44.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., no. 15, stanza 3.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., no. 15, stanza 3; no. vii, stanza 13.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., no. 15, stanza 4.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> *Shāhnāma* (W), vi, p. 117.

final section, while the names of Badri and Nosar are used as little more than pegs on which to hang episodes and narrative largely of Khoneli's own contriving—this relatively 'original' writing being, however, freely laced with formulas and conventional passages of one kind and another drawn from the repertoire of an aristocratic minstrelsy. Subsequently a number of further tales are composed, perhaps by another hand or hands writing consciously in what has proved to be a successful manner, in which, while the use of formulas and other conventions does not become less, the element of pure folk-tale is much slighter. In these later stories the debt to Persian literature—in particular to Firdausī—becomes perhaps somewhat greater. The eponymous hero of the cycle figures in each, although in only three—'The Story of the Stars', 'The Story of the Talismans', and 'The Story of Amiran Darejanisdze's entry into Balkh; and of Balkham Qamisdze'—can he really be reckoned the protagonist, his role in the others being somewhat artificially contrived. To enable the Prologue to serve this enlarged design a short addition and perhaps a few adjustments are made thereto.

If the views set out in the foregoing pages are accorded a general acceptance, it must surely be conceded that among the great names of popular tradition that of Amiran has proved to be one of the most enduringly magnetic.

## 8

The few references to *Amiran-Darejaniani* to be found in the writings of Western scholars are for the most part likely to convey a somewhat misleading impression. Characterizations such as *Ritterroman*<sup>1</sup> must tend to suggest a work akin to those of Chrétien de Troyes, Gottfried von Strassburg, or Sir Thomas Malory. But while they do indeed contain many passages that would seem quite in place in the narratives of these romancers, the basic appeal of these tales is to levels of appreciation less sophisticated than those at which the European writers aimed. It is necessary to go back a little in time beyond the earliest of them to find a work which shows compelling similarities to Khoneli's. Different in kind as they palpably are, a juxtaposition of *Amiran-Darejaniani*

<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., F. N. Finck, 'Die georgische Literatur', *Kultur der Gegenwart*, i, 7, 1906, p. 304; Bleichsteiner, 'Kaukasische Völker', in *Reallexikon der Vorgeschichte*, vi, Berlin, 1926, p. 252; *Larousse du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle*, iii, 1930, p. 765.

and the possibly closely contemporary *Chanson de Roland* yields much of interest. The most obvious common feature is perhaps the loving description of mighty armour-cleaving blows. Such a passage as this:

E Anseïs laiset le cheval curre,  
Si vait ferir Turgis de Turteluse.  
L'escut li freint desuz l'oree bucle,  
De sun osberc li derumpit les dubles,  
Del bon espiet el cors li met la mure,  
Empeinst le ben, tut le fer li mist ultre,  
Pleine sa hanste el camp mort le tresturnet.  
Ço dist Rollant, 'Cist colp est de produme!'

—could appear on any page in the Georgian work. Again, in each case there is a lack of interest in feminine personality; and in each one striking exception to be made to the generalization.<sup>2</sup> In this connexion it may be tentatively suggested that the Eastern and Western compositions alike represent that point in cultural development whereat a romantic sensibility first begins to work its way into the tradition of heroic narrative. Within a century, if we may assume both to date from c. 1100, this process will have led to the triumph of the 'courtly' style in both Georgia and France—to Rustaveli's 'The Man of the Panther-skin' and to the romances of Chrétien de Troyes.

The folk-tale affinities of *Amiran-Darejaniani* are brought out with at least equal clarity, however, by this juxtaposition. While the exploits of Roland and his companions at Roncevaux do not transcend the bounds of the human, in Khoneli's work the feats of arms belong to the world of fantasy. To consider only some very minor figures, Nosar's retainer Ali Dilami can rout an army single-handed,<sup>3</sup> and three of Amiran's companions in arms fend off for a week the attacks of 'a fearful host'.<sup>4</sup> Within the framework of such a convention as this the sense of character which does so much to invest the exchanges between Roland and Oliver before and during the battle with their poignancy can hardly be looked for. And indeed the one personage in our text who seems to have the makings of a real character in him is Amiran's irrepressible retainer Kowos Kosidze.

The single instance in our text where we can feel some real ethical

<sup>1</sup> *Roland*, pp. 108, 110, lines 1281-8.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 226.

<sup>4</sup> See pp. 120-1.

tension occurs in the story of the Star princesses, where the princely suitors, secure in the knowledge that he will not do them any serious hurt, successively importune Amiran to joust with them. In each case the Baghdad hero professes the most profound reluctance to join in combat with a royal adversary, and in a striking phrase he calls himself 'the servant of all who are of royal blood'.<sup>1</sup> This deep reverence for monarchy, manifest again in his words to the treacherous Khazar prince,<sup>2</sup> and also in Ambri's treatment of the Khan king on the first occasion that he has him in his power,<sup>3</sup> may seem at first sight surprising in a work reflecting the outlook of a robustly feudal society, but becomes more comprehensible if the argument set out above for placing the composition of *Amiran-Darejaniani* in the great reign of David II is accepted. On the other hand, although David's campaigns against the Turks<sup>4</sup> may be looked on as forming part of the same great Christian counter-movement against Islam as that First Crusade in which some have found the inspiration of the *Roland*, there is in Khoneli's pages no trace of the patriotism or of the religious fervour which vibrate so magnificently through the French epic. Neither edification nor inspiration had any place in his conscious purpose. For all their chivalric trappings, his stories are fundamentally much nearer to folk-tale than is such a work as for example *Beowulf*, lacking as they do any moral element comparable to that sense of kingly duty which in the English poem informs traditional material not basically dissimilar from that utilized by the Georgian writer.

Although these tales have no purpose other than to beguile, the ethos underlying them may on examination perhaps be found more impressive than that at the foundations of much literature of vastly greater moral pretension. After many days of combat Indo Dchabuki looks up from the ground to say to his vanquisher, 'Thanks be to God that I have seen this best of dchabukis' with my own eyes—for who could believe in such worship on hearsay only!<sup>5</sup> Savarsamidze breaks off from his account of the battles of Amiran and Sepedavle to say to his royal auditor, 'King of Kings, admire the courtesy of Sepedavle's barons! When Darejanisdze was having the best of it they must assuredly have felt grief in

<sup>1</sup> See p. 82.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 51.

<sup>5</sup> See p. 235.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 85.

<sup>4</sup> Grousset, pp. 418-21.

<sup>6</sup> See p. 57.

their hearts—yet they looked as though they were delighted!<sup>1</sup> When, having vainly tried with the offer to let them go unharmed to induce them to surrender his stolen herd of horses, Mze Dchabuki is constrained to slaughter the three brigand chiefs, his only feeling is one of regret for the necessity. He has a young henchman of theirs wounded in the fight nursed back to health, and then tells him to go where he will.<sup>2</sup> Many other passages manifest a generosity of temper almost equally arresting.

It surely does not indeed require 'a translator's natural partiality for the author he translates'<sup>3</sup> to make *Amiran-Darejaniani* appear a very considerable achievement. When we cease to scrutinize it as a thesaurus of folk-tale and of assorted marvels and make the endeavour to arrive at some assessment of its literary worth, its chief virtues—which are perhaps to be ascribed in large measure to that close kinship in technique to the art of oral narrative which seems to bring the zestful tones of a living voice to our ears—emerge as immediacy of impact, economy of expression, and, above and subsuming all, the most incomparable verve and gaiety of spirit. The vividness, too, with which time and time again a few apparently effortless words drawn from the store of traditional formulas bring gorgeous scenes, full of movement, before our eyes is surely the mark of a story-teller of the first order.

The final claim for that story-teller might be that his work is instinct with a courage that takes itself utterly for granted as the only possible way of responding to the chances and wonders of life, and with a generosity at once chivalrous and warmly human for which in the whole corpus of Western romance it might be hard to find the match.

## 9

The structure of Georgian is so far removed from that of the Indo-European languages as to present the translator with quite peculiar problems. In the case of Khoneli's work this fundamental difficulty of equivalence is aggravated by a compactness of expression so extreme that it is often virtually impossible to draw a line between legitimate translation and carefree paraphrase.

Since it can hardly be contested that it is in its vigorous terseness

<sup>1</sup> See p. 160.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 174.

<sup>3</sup> S. Evans, in the Introduction to his translation of *The High History of the Holy Graal*, London, 1910, p. xix.

of style that the special character of *Amiran-Darejaniani* very largely subsists, any attempt to produce a smooth-running version that 'does not read like a translation' would, in the translator's opinion, have been radically misconceived: his aim has rather been to preserve as much of the elliptical energy of the Georgian as possible, at the cost where need be of all save the bare minimum requirements of English usage. Furthermore, even at the risk of irking those whose interests may lie in the field of comparative literature or of folk-lore, he has sought to produce a rendering close enough to the original to be of some real assistance to any who may be trying to make their way through its thickets.

A special problem has been presented by the formal anomalies in which the text abounds. Where, as very often happens, the person or thing referred to in a pronoun or verbal form is not that which the normal rules of proximity would suggest, the appropriate noun has been inserted without remark. A similar procedure has been followed wherever English usage might prefer a noun to a pronoun. Changes in the contrary direction have naturally been made likewise. On the other hand, where it has seemed necessary to insert some word or passage which cannot be read into the Georgian, or to expand what stands therein, the insertion or expansion appears in brackets.

## *The Story of Abesalom, the Indian King<sup>2</sup>*

There was once in India a king Abesalom who was powerful, wise, and free from all sorrows.<sup>3</sup> He had a hundred leopards<sup>4</sup> and six hundred white falcons and hawks,<sup>5</sup> and he was lord over three thousand barons.<sup>6</sup> This was his wont: on the second, third, and fourth days of the week<sup>7</sup>—on each of these three—he would summon his barons, a thousand at a time, to a feast whereat amid pomp and rejoicing he would bestow gifts upon them after their deserts: then on the fifth, sixth, and seventh days he would go hunting and take his ease: and on the first he would sit in state and busy himself with the affairs of the realm, dispensing justice and ordering the concerns of castles, cities, and provinces.

One day he ordered a hunt and went out and enjoyed good sport. Afterwards he returned home and in high good humour commanded a banquet. Then he gave thanks to the beaters, saying, 'You found me good sport: now I would have you go out again and rouse me some more close at hand.'

The beaters went out, and found more game than they could

<sup>1</sup> The primary meaning of *kari* is 'gate'. For sense of 'chapter' cf. supposed original significance of Old English *fitt*, 'juncture'. See *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*.

<sup>2</sup> *hindot' mep'is*. Literally '... of the King of the Indians'. Such royal styles are rendered in this fashion throughout the translation. *Mep'e* is a general term for an independent ruler of any kind. In the translation it is regularly rendered 'king', regardless of occasional discords.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the opening of the narrative in 'The man of the panther-skin': 'There was once in Arabia, by the grace of God, a king Rostevan, happy, exalted ...' (R 32).

<sup>4</sup> Sc., for hunting.

<sup>5</sup> *k'ori t'et'ri da mçqazari*. It would appear that *mçqazari* denotes a particular species of hawk, but it is impossible to determine which. See Chubinov, col. 932. It would be natural to render *t'et'ri* and *mçqazari* each as 'white'. 'Falcon' is used merely to avoid repetition. The terms recur on p. 112.

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix A, p. 236, *Didebuli*.

<sup>7</sup> In Georgian most of the days of the week have a numerical designation.



make a reckoning of. Presently they came upon an antelope<sup>1</sup> with golden horns, black eyes and hooves, a white belly, and a red back.<sup>2</sup> The man who had seen it first returned to the king and made report. The king asked, 'What manner of animal have you seen?'—and he replied, 'Oh King, may you live for ever! I have seen an antelope with golden horns, eyes and hooves as black as jet, a white belly, and a red back.' The king rejoiced and said to his barons, 'A strange creature is it indeed that this man has seen! I must not fail to behold it—and as it is such a marvel it is my desire that we capture it unharmed.'

They put an end to the feast, and the king and all his barons made ready. They took the beater with them, and he brought them to the place where he had found [the animal]. They went out on to the plain and saw the antelope looking just as the man had said.<sup>3</sup> The king said, 'Let every man charge—but take care not to kill it!' Then they all charged, while the antelope made off.

After they had galloped a day's journey only the king and three of his barons were left [in the hunt], for all the rest had fallen away wearied. They continued with the chase until dusk over the distance of seven days' journey, for neither could they overtake [the antelope] nor would they give up. At length, however, the antelope got in among some rocks, gave a bound, and disappeared.

Now they found themselves gazing out over a strange land. No landmark could they recognize, nor did they see on any side town, village, or beast. Quite unknown to them was this land, and they had no notion where they might be. Then presently, looking about, the king perceived a stone building,<sup>4</sup> and wondering said, 'What manner of building can this be, in such a desolate place?' Entering, they found on the one hand the portraits of three dchabukis,<sup>5</sup> with set among them the picture of a maiden whose like has never been

<sup>1</sup> *k'uriki*: or perhaps 'mountain goat'. There may be a reminiscence of this episode in the reference to the hunting of the same animal in R 75.

<sup>2</sup> The div Akwān assumes, in order to lure Rustam to his destruction, the form of an onager of golden colour, with a line of black from neck to tail. *Shāhnāma* (W), iii, pp. 273–6.

<sup>3</sup> Literally, 'saw the antelope with the same aspect'.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Bahrām Chubīnā's coming upon a mysterious palace after the pursuit of an onager, *Shāhnāma* (W), viii, p. 156. P'arnavazi, the legendary founder of the kingdom of K'art'li, the kernel of the later Georgian realm, comes upon a store of treasure in a cave while pursuing a deer. *Chronicle*, p. 29.

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix A, p. 235.

seen by the eye of man. One of the dchabukis, who was tall, of magnificent appearance, and clad in mail, had a scimitar in his hand. Above [his portrait] was written:

When I, Amiran Darejanisdze with my retainer<sup>1</sup> Savar-samidze, Badri Iamanisdze<sup>2</sup> with his retainer Indo Dchabuki,<sup>3</sup> Nosar Nisreli<sup>4</sup> with his retainer Ali Dilami,<sup>5</sup> reached this place after slaughtering the Kajis<sup>6</sup> and brought away the daughter of the King of the Seas,<sup>7</sup> the whole of Arabia bore down upon us: and then not ill did we quit ourselves!

Then [the king and his barons] perceived to the left portraits of the three dchabuki-retainers.<sup>8</sup>

They came out of the building, and there upon the plain they saw the bones of horses and of men, together with pieces of shattered armour such as the eye of man has never seen. The king and his barons wondered and said, 'Who can those dchabukis have been, and when can they have lived? One would seem to have been the lord of the others, but yet they look as if they were of the same land as he.' Thus did they talk—but as they could find out nothing they turned back. After seven days they won their way with much trouble out of that unknown land and made for the royal palace.<sup>9</sup>

The barons assembled to find the king melancholy, for it grieved him to be left without any knowledge of those dchabukis.<sup>10</sup> He would not eat or go out to hunt or have any feasting. The news ran through the whole land of how the spirit of Abesalom the Indian king had been troubled by the finding of a building out on a plain. Some interpreted this in one way, some in another. At length Jazir,

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A, p. 236, *Qma*.

<sup>2</sup> See Introduction, pp. xvi-xviii, xxi-xxii, Iamanisdze = son of Iaman (literally, 'the Yemeni').

<sup>3</sup> Literally, 'the Indian dchabuki'.

<sup>4</sup> As for Badri. Nisreli, possibly *Misreli*, 'the Egyptian'.

<sup>5</sup> Literally, 'Ali the Dailamite.' Dailam is the mountainous part of Gilān, bounded on the east by Māzandarān and on the west by Azerbāijān. In his Epilogue Firdausī, *Shāhnāma* (W), ix, p. 121, speaks of a certain 'Ali the Dailamite' as his friend and helper. One is tempted to speculate whether the name may appear in our text as the result of a recent reading of this passage by Khoneli.

<sup>6</sup> *Kaji* may connote any kind of evil spirit. Cf. R 190. Here it is synonymous with *Devi*. (See Appendix A, p. 235.)

<sup>7</sup> This title occurs also in R (1010, 1404, &c.).

<sup>8</sup> Literally, 'the three dchabukis, their [sc. Amiran, Badri, and Nosar] retainers'.

<sup>9</sup> There appears to be a lacuna in the text here.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. the melancholy that weighs upon Rostevan after the disappearance of the stranger clad in the panther-skin. R 98 seq.

first among the viziers, came before the king and said, 'Oh King, may you live for ever! Great is my presumption, I know—yet I cannot forbear! For even if you should be angered and cut off my head, death would be a joyful release after beholding you thus plunged in grief!' Then the king commanded him, 'Speak, Jazir, first among the viziers—you are not wont to talk foolishly!' Jazir went on, 'Oh King, may you live for ever! Now so please you—ever since you went off in pursuit of that antelope you have been weighed down by grief! Neither hunt nor feast have you held, wherefore the whole land is given over to melancholy and gloom.'<sup>1</sup>

The king replied, 'I know, even as I have heard [it said], oh first among my viziers, that by brooding on this untoward chance I have brought grief upon myself. And yet I cannot rid myself of unease! In a desolate place I found [the likenesses of] certain men, the portraits of six dchabukis, and among these the picture of a beautiful maiden. One of these men I could see to be the lord of the others—but who these dchabukis can have been I do not know.' And he went on, 'Anyone who has seen them must tell me all that he knows of them.' Then Jazir, first among the viziers, said, 'Oh King, may you live for ever! Since it distresses me that Your Majesty should grieve in this fashion this would I say to you: what if you have seen [the portraits of] some wretched men or other and yet have failed to learn their story?' The king replied, 'I know that I have none save myself to blame for this grief, but still I cannot rid myself of it!'

Jazir, first among the viziers, said, 'The realm and your whole people are sunk in gloom: now, if it please you, go out hunting and hold feasts—for you are the first among all kings! And even though you have not yet learned the story of those dchabukis, send out men to ascertain it.'<sup>2</sup>

The king listened to the counsel of Jazir the vizier. He went out to hunt, afterwards returned to his palace, dined, took his ease, and held a feast—and still he could not root out the sorrow in his heart! The news spread through the whole land, 'The king is deep in melancholy: while in pursuit of an antelope he came upon a building with the portraits of certain men inside it, and he would fain learn their story. Yet, ask whom he will, no one can tell it to him.'

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the vizier Sograt's inquiries as to the cause of Rostevan's melancholy. R 59-60.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. T'inat'in's advice to Rostevan. R 114.

The king sat with his barons about him, and there was talk of nothing save the finding of the portraits. Then presently Abulaskan Abulakamisdze,<sup>1</sup> one of his barons, rose and said, 'Oh King, may you live for ever! I know something of these men over whom Your Majesty is grieving, and if you so please, I will tell it to you.' Then the king turned to him and said, 'Speak on, Abulaskan!' And Abulaskan began:

Oh King, may you live for ever! When I was a small child my father Abulkasim sent some merchants, Abubakar<sup>2</sup> and many others, to Baghdad with five hundred camels and five hundred mules. Off they went, and returned, having done well, after spending a year there. Then, when he had made his report Abubakar said to my father:

'I have something strange to tell you of. After we had made ready to quit Baghdad some men came up and told us that Arab brigands<sup>3</sup> were lying in wait for us. Fear of those brigands kept us in Baghdad for a month, although all the while we were in readiness to leave. At length a certain Arab came to us and said, "I know that you are afraid of brigands, but if you will pay me a guide's fee, by God in Heaven I will take you round by a way on which none save God Himself can do you any harm!"

'When we had made him take an oath we felt secure, and paid him a thousand drachmas.<sup>4</sup> Then he told us, "You must take a month's provisions for yourselves and your horses, for we are going to cross a plain which has neither water nor pasture." We furnished ourselves with everything that he had told us to obtain, set out, and then after journeying for a fortnight through a desolate region we came to an immense plain on which there lay so many bones that it was as though there had been a snow-fall of horses and men. In the middle was a hill with a stone building upon it. Amazed, we asked our guide about those strange sights and that building. He replied, "Do you not know of this?—It is the memorial put up by Amiran Darejanisdze."

'We entered the building, and found inside the portrait of a

<sup>1</sup> (Abu'l-Hasan Abu'l-Kāsim.)

<sup>2</sup> *Abubak'ar* (Abu Bakr).

<sup>3</sup> Throughout our text Arabs are associated with brigandage. Cf. pp. 38, 169.

<sup>4</sup> *drahkani*. From Greek δραχμή. An old Georgian coin containing, according to Orbeliani (p. 87), four drams of gold. It seems to be impossible to distinguish the use of this word from that of *dinari* (see p. 19)—and it is in fact used in the Georgian Bible to translate δηνάριον (Matt. xviii. 28, xx. 2; John xii. 5).

fine-looking dchabuki, clad in mail, who held a scimitar in his hand. Alongside were the portraits of six other persons, and above was written :

When I Amiran Darejanisdze with my retainer Savar-samidze, Badri Iamanisdze with his retainer Indo Dchabuki, Nosar Nisreli with his retainer Ali Dilami, reached this place after slaughtering the Kajis, great hosts<sup>1</sup> bore down upon us: and then not ill did we quit ourselves!

'Amazed, I asked, "Who can those dchabukis have been?" But the guide only replied that the building was a great landmark for the whole land. Then I asked him what they had done; but he told us that he knew no more.'

When his man had given my father Abulkasim his report of the profitable trading he had done, my father, delighted, went to sit in his garden and feasted in high good humour.<sup>2</sup> I, a small child at the time, stood by and listened while he asked Abubakar for news of Persia.

When Abulasan had told him this story the king said, 'It grieves me that such men should have lived—and yet I cannot learn their story!' He sank into a still deeper melancholy, and ceased to go out hunting and to hold feasts. Then at length Jazir, first among the viziers, went before him and said, 'Oh King, may you live for ever! I too grieve that you have found out nothing concerning those men.' (He spoke in this fashion because he had already spoken his mind in his first speech, and he did not venture to voice it again; for it is not for a liegeman to argue overmuch with his lord, or to boast that he will deal with everything.)—Jazir, first among the viziers, continued, 'Send men to the cities of Persia: perhaps some retainer of Amiran's from whom we could learn something may still be alive.'

The king was pleased with Jazir's words, and sent envoys to all the provinces of Persia. They were away for a long time. Two of them, coming away from Baghddad after a sojourn during which they had failed to learn anything, overtook an old man on the road

<sup>1</sup> (*lashk'ari*): Persian *lashkar*. Usually translated 'army', but since in our text it may denote any kind of body of armed men it is generally rendered 'host'; occasionally 'warriors'.

<sup>2</sup> In the passage rendered by this sentence and the two following the text is confused.

who asked them, 'Where do you come from, brothers? You have the look of foreigners to me.' They told him everything—that they were Indians, and the business they were travelling on. Then he said to them, 'If you treat me generously, I will help you on your way.' They rejoiced, and one of them presented him with some very choice Indian raiment. Then he told them, 'Near by there is a small city built by Amiran himself, and there his retainer Savarsamidze lives still. Savarsamidze was his companion in all his exploits from youth up, and he can tell you everything.'

The envoys set off, and after journeying for five days they came to a very fine city on the bank of a river that came flowing down from the land of Balkh. When they drew near they saw a portrait of Amiran Darejanisdze on horseback on the wall with the city gate, and each said to the other, 'That is the man over whom our lord the Indian king is grieving!' They entered the city and were met and given lodging. Now it was Savarsamidze's rule that all who came should be lodged in a fitting manner, and that no one was either to inquire of new-comers who they might be nor yet to tell them anything. And so those envoys stayed there for three days without being questioned by anyone.

On each of those three days they were summoned to feast. Under the roof on the end wall of the large hall there was a portrait of Amiran Darejanisdze. Savarsamidze, an old man, came and sat down in the hall to feast. When they had begun to bring in the wine he summoned his attendants, and they sat down on either side of him. They all rose, Savarsamidze first offered up a prayer to God and then turned, gazed upon the portrait of Amiran Darejanisdze, wept, and said, 'There is a man whose like has never been upon the earth!' On each of those three days the envoys [after this] made obeisance, sipped, and sat down. On the fourth, after making obeisance, they said, 'We have been sent to you by the Indian king; give ear!' When they had told him of all that the king had commanded Savarsamidze wept and said, 'Had you not been sent by a great king, by God in Heaven, I should cut off your heads! You will not succeed in getting me to tell you my lord's story!' He dismissed them, and they went back to the Indian king and said, 'Oh King, may you live for ever! We have found one who was Amiran Darejanisdze's retainer—a fine-looking old man. But he would tell us nothing.'

The king rejoiced and said, 'Thanks be to God that I should

have the chance of learning this story before my days are done!' Then his servants told him, 'If you do not see him soon he may die, being an old man.' Straightway the king sent envoys with this letter to Savarsamidze: 'To Savarsamidze, the renowned dchabuki: Our Majesty sends you this summons.—We rejoice that you are still alive, and thank God for granting you length of days. Now as soon as you have read this letter from us, make haste to appear before us, that the sight of you may rejoice us. We will treat you with the honour due to a father, and entertain you as if you had been tutor to us in our boyhood—while you shall tell us the story of your lord Amiran Darejanisdze, and so dispel the melancholy which oppresses our heart.—Long life to you!' They presented this letter to Savarsamidze, who, when he had read it, wrote in reply:

'King of Kings, may you live for ever!' Savarsamidze, earth beneath Your Majesty's feet, has read what you command. Rejoicing, I have lifted up my hands and blessed Your Majesty, first for inquiring after the well-being of me, earth beneath Your Majesty's feet, and for sending me a letter which has afforded me delight and with the honour it does me brought comfort to my old age.

'You ask about my lord Amiran Darejanisdze—that man whose like has never been upon the face of all the earth, nor will, as I believe, appear in time to come. You have summoned me to come before you—and indeed to set eyes on you, were I worthy to do so, would be like beholding God Himself! But the length of the journey and my great age prevent me.—Now if so please Your Majesty, send one of your barons to me, and as much as I have not forgotten or got confused in my old age I will make known to you in a letter. I made this proposal to your servants, but they would not heed me, [saying that] you had given them no such orders.'

The envoys set out and brought Savarsamidze's letter to the Indian king. The king ordered two of his barons to make ready, and they put camels to a litter. The king gave them this letter: 'Since God has spared you thus long, Our Majesty must not fail to see you. Now I<sup>2</sup> have dispatched Junar and Omar, two of my barons, to you, with a furnished litter: climb into this and they

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Chronicle*, p. 114, lines 4-5: *mep'e mep'et'a* reflects, of course, the Persian *Shāhanshāh*.

<sup>2</sup> Here and elsewhere the translation reflects the oscillation in the text between the singular and the *pluralis maiestatis*.

will bring you to us without hardship. For by the living God, I swear that you must come!

The barons Junar and Omar went and presented the Indian king's letter to Savarsamidze. They made ready the litter, placed him in it, and brought him before the Indian king. The Indian king rejoiced beyond measure and said to Savarsamidze, 'My heart is gladdened by the sight of you; and you too may be glad, for I will treat you as my father, and when you desire to go home, I will send you off with great honour.' Then he turned to his barons and said, 'By Heaven, well can I believe that this man could have performed all those splendid deeds!' The barons concurred and said, 'Oh King, may you live for ever! Never have our eyes beheld such a man! And yet how much more [splendid] must his lord have been!' Then Savarsamidze made obeisance to the great Indian king, wept, and said, 'What would Your Majesty have said had you seen my lord, since a pitiful old man can please you thus much!'

For some time they entertained him with great honour, and bestowed gifts upon him every day. Then at length the king said, 'I have been consumed with longing to hear of the deeds of your lord and also of you his retainers—but at first you were fatigued. Now begin, however, and tell me of them.' Savarsamidze replied, 'Oh King, may you live for ever! I am an old man and want the strength to recount them, for the story of my lord and of the other dchabukis has twelve chapters. Perhaps through old age I could not tell the whole in a year, for from his youth up I was the companion of his deeds.—Now tell me which of his adventures I must relate first; that which touches the building you have seen, in which my lord himself, Badri Iamanisdze and Nosar Nisreli, who are there portrayed, appear—or some other?' Then the king commanded him, 'Tell me of the deeds of those three.' Savarsamidze replied, 'They come in the middle, but whatever Your Majesty desires, that will I tell you of.'



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*The Story of Badri Iamanisdze*


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King of Kings, give ear: may you live for ever! May God prosper your friends and bring confusion upon those who are false to you!—Once when we were out hunting a leopard fastened upon an antelope. Amiran Darejanisdze came up and was looking on—and then we saw a man approaching on a black steed. He was arrayed in black, and his face and right hand were also blackened.<sup>1</sup> Amiran Darejanisdze felt pity for him and said, 'I am sorry for this man—what can his trouble be?' And he asked him, 'What troubles you; why are you in mourning?' Then the man told him, 'My story is a long one: go on and enjoy your hunting, and I shall tell it to you later.' But Amiran Darejanisdze moved off quickly, and we went home. Then when we had eaten and the feast had ended Amiran summoned this man, called him over, made him sit down and asked him, 'What troubles you, and why are you arrayed in black?' Then the man wept and said, 'It is all for the sake of my lord.' Amiran asked, 'Is he dead?' To this the man replied, 'No, but he has met with disaster.' Thereupon Amiran ordered, 'Tell us all about him.'—And he began with his tale.

My lord was Badri Iamanisdze, a dchabuki so glorious that I cannot tell you of all his deeds: it would take too long and become irksome. So I shall only tell you of some few of them. Once he was come to manhood there was none who could stand against him in combat. Whenever he heard that famous dchabukis were to be found anywhere, he would go there and fight and vanquish them. Nowhere was there any who could equal him in battle; in none could he find a peer. He began to sit still grieving over this: no longer would he go out hunting or exercise himself with arms; no longer would he have feasting. In his cities and lands there was

<sup>1</sup> Cf. with this passage that in which the mourning Raib Nobati is found and borne off home to tell his story after the feast (pp. 168-9).

gloom, and the people asked, 'What has happened to Badri Iamanisdze, that he should grieve in this fashion?'

An old Arab came to me as I sat at the door of his room—I was the groom of his chamber—and asked, 'What ails Badri Iamanisdze?' Then when I had told him the cause of his grief he said to me, 'I can furnish such a cure for this that not only will he himself curse the day he was born, but anyone else who may be with him will do so too!' I went in and gave the news. Badri Iamanisdze was delighted, sat up, and said to me, 'Ha! Bring him to me!' I went out and brought him in. Badri said to him, 'Can you tell me of a man who could stand against me?' The Arab replied that he could. Then Badri asked who he was, and the Arab told him, 'Go and carry off the daughter of the King of the Seas, and you will encounter dchabukis—not one nor two, but many: so perilous is that road that there is no getting to the end.' Then Badri Iamanisdze asked him, 'Who is there who knows it?' And the Arab replied, 'I myself know it for some way.' Badri had me bring out raiment and then presented him with it. After that he summoned his retainer, the lion Indo Dchabuki, and told him all. And by your head, we set out the very next day, with that old Arab as our guide.

After we had travelled for a fortnight he brought us to the top of a hill, showed us what lay beyond, and then said, 'I myself am going no farther, but go on over that plain and you will find what you are looking for. I shall wait here for a fortnight, and then if you have not returned, I shall take myself off.' At this Indo Dchabuki said, 'By God in Heaven and my lord's head, did I not fear God, I would cut off your head! You have deceived this king—and now you want to stop short on the road!' The Arab began to mutter, but Badri Iamanisdze laughed and said, 'Do not be angry, Indo Dchabuki! We are eager for deeds of prowess, and now in truth it will be made clear what manner of dchabukis we are!' So the Arab stayed behind, and we went on.

After we had journeyed on for a long time we saw a tent, with a horse tethered by the entrance. Indo Dchabuki said, 'Let us find out whose tent that is.' Badri told him to go and see, and he went forward to the entrance, where he stopped. Inside he saw a certain Mtsituri<sup>1</sup> Dchabuki, and asked him who he was. Then the dchabuki began to rail at him, but he would only say, 'I suppose you have

<sup>1</sup> *mçit'uri*: literally 'ruddy'.

been tricked by that Arab—many another has he tricked and brought to his death!’ Indo Dchabuki said, ‘Railing befits women only:¹ if you are a dchabuki, come out and give us some play with your scimitar!’ Then Mtsituri told him to stand back from the entrance, and he did so. Presently Mtsituri Dchabuki came out on horseback, armed, and struck him with his scimitar. Then Indo Dchabuki seized hold of him, wrenched him from his saddle, brought him to us as though he were a little child [and said to Badri], ‘He spoke insolently to me: now you must judge him.’

Mtsituri Dchabuki made obeisance and said, ‘Hail, Nosar Nisreli! We had looked for your coming before this.’ Indo Dchabuki told him, ‘This is not Nosar, brother, but Badri Iamanisdze!’ On we went, taking Mtsituri Dchabuki with us, and journeyed for a long time. Presently we saw two tents, one large and one small, with a large black horse tethered near by. We went up to the entrance [of the larger]. Inside was a man lying asleep: two attendants stood with drawn scimitars, one at his head, one at his feet. Indo Dchabuki called out, ‘Who are you?’—whereupon the attendants laid their fingers upon their lips and whispered, ‘Go away before you come to harm!’ Badri Iamanisdze said to them, ‘Rouse him, whoever he may be!’—but they only retorted, ‘Come and do so yourself!’ Indo Dchabuki dismounted and entered [the tent], whereupon the attendants came forward and fell on him with their scimitars. Seizing one with one hand and one with the other, he flung them both to the ground and killed them. Then he said, ‘By God in Heaven, just as I have vanquished you, so will my lord vanquish yours.’ Nothing less than shouting could waken that sleeping dchabuki! Indo Dchabuki went up and shook him, yelling. He woke and opened eyes that were the colour of blood—they were fearful enough! He sat up and said to himself, ‘That old Arab must have tricked them!’ Then he called out to us, ‘Get away safely while yet you can!’ To this Badri Iamanisdze replied, ‘We do not find these words amusing: come and give us some play with your scimitar!’

Then the dchabuki told us to stand back, and we did so. Presently he came out in his armour—by your head, he was fearful enough! Indo Dchabuki wanted to charge him, but Badri Iamanisdze said,

¹ Cf. *Nibelungen* (p. 497, quatrain 2346):

Dô sprach der hêrre Diêtrîch ‘daz ênzîmt niht heledê lîp,  
dâz si sûln scêlten, sam diu alden wîp . . .’.

'No, brother, it is for me to do battle now!' Then they circled round each other at the gallop, shouted, and charged.<sup>1</sup> The dchabuki struck Badri with his spear, shivering it—and then Badri Iamanisdze seized hold of him, wrenched him from his saddle, and dashed him to the ground.

The dchabuki rose and said, 'Nosar Nisreli, may you live for ever! By Heaven, you have shown yourself to be a good man!' Amazed, we asked, 'Who is this Nosar Nisreli of whom these men stand in such dread?' Then Mtsituri Dchabuki told us, 'This letter was written [by Nosar] to the King of the Seas: "I, Nosar Nisreli, am coming to wed your daughter: do not give her away to any other—if you wish to live in peace!" We have been lying in wait for him, and took you for him.'

We left [the vanquished dchabuki] there and went on, taking Mtsituri Dchabuki along with us. Presently Mtsituri Dchabuki said to Badri Iamanisdze, 'I have something<sup>2</sup> to say to you, but do not get angry with me over it.' Badri told him to speak, and he went on, 'Lion of lions, take pity upon your prowess! Do not continue to seek for battles and victories over men! Turn about—no man can win through along that road you want to take!' Badri Iamanisdze replied, 'Never again let me hear such talk from you!'

We journeyed on for a long while, and then Badri asked Mtsituri Dchabuki, 'What [host] is this in front of us?' Mtsituri replied, 'This great host belongs to Shavi Dchabuki:<sup>3</sup> he himself is some distance off, with twelve tents. May God bring your enemies to battle with him!' The host did not seek to bar the way to us, and we journeyed on [through it] for a long while. The plain was filled with an immeasurable, countless host: as we passed through it some were singing and others were drinking wine. When they saw us they would say, 'Nosar Nisreli has come—a good and illustrious man, by Heaven!' We continued to make our way on through this host, the whole of which was singing the praises<sup>4</sup> of Shavi Dchabuki, until noon—and then, when we had got clear of it, we saw at a distance some large tents by a piece of ground used for contests:<sup>5</sup> twelve smaller ones were pitched round about.

<sup>1</sup> One of the constantly recurring formulas with a traditional air. Cf. Appendix C. It is rendered in the translation without any pronominal adjustments to context.

<sup>2</sup> Reading *me rasame* for *marasame*.

<sup>3</sup> Literally, 'the black dchabuki'.

<sup>4</sup> A frequent formula in our text. Cf. also R 603, 1027, 1430, 1435, 1512.

<sup>5</sup> *Milioni* means properly 'arena', or 'lists'.

When they saw us Shavi Dchabuki's men went and told him that some dchabukis were coming. He looked out and said, 'See, someone has captured that unhappy dchabuki<sup>1</sup> and has brought him along.' He raised his hand in salutation and asked, 'Is it Nosar Nisreli?' And we replied, 'It is not Nosar; it is Badri Iamanisdze.'

Shavi Dchabuki came out to meet us: he greeted us, and we him. He lodged us in a large tent and showed us friendliness. Presently he came to see our lord. Now it was his great fault that he would never suffer any whom he had vanquished to get away alive. And he was always eager for combat. During that day he showed us great honour, but after night had fallen he sent a man with this message: 'This is no time for idling! Let there be battle tomorrow between you and me, as our custom requires.' Badri Iamanisdze was delighted, and sent this reply: 'Being your guest I could not well issue a challenge myself; but since you so command, by Heaven I will meet you!'

The next day Shavi Dchabuki put on his armour, mounted his black horse, and came out—by your head, had you seen him, you would have been delighted! On our side, Badri Iamanisdze put on his armour and mounted his white steed: by your head, those heroes were both men enough! They circled round each other at the gallop, shouted and engaged. The blows of their scimitars were like the thunder in the heavens! They fought for a long time: each shivered his scimitar upon the other, and then drew out a fresh one.<sup>2</sup> Then at length Badri Iamanisdze's anger rose, he wheeled his horse about,<sup>3</sup> charged and brought down his scimitar upon [Shavi's] right shoulder, cleft him through to the left hip and killed him.

When Shavi Dchabuki's host, which had been standing by, saw their lord a corpse, they straightway flung themselves upon us, and we fought with them. Battle was nothing new for Badri Iamanisdze—but had you seen Indo Dchabuki then, by your head, you would have been delighted! We slaughtered and routed that host, and then turned back. Badri Iamanisdze dismounted, and we went into Shavi Dchabuki's tent. Mtsituri Dchabuki came to Badri Iamanisdze and said, 'Blessed is your right arm—for there

<sup>1</sup> Sc. Mtsituri.

<sup>2</sup> Dchabukis are on occasion described as going into battle girt with three scimitars. Cf. pp. 23, 161, &c.

<sup>3</sup> In this formula dchabukis turn round after one charge to get into the next.

is no dchabuki like you today upon the face of all the earth! By your head, twelve illustrious champions have met their deaths at the hands of this dchabuki, and we did not believe that any man could vanquish him. Now the road ahead is hard, but for such a dchabuki as you all things are easy!' We stayed there for a week, taking rest.

We set free some prisoners, and in that host of Shavi Dchabuki's we found a man by the name of Usib,<sup>1</sup> whom we brought forward. He made obeisance to Badri Iamanisdze and said, 'Blessed are your right arm and your prowess, since you have shed the blood of so great a champion as this Shavi Dchabuki, and released me from his hands! Now in return I will give you good service on the road you are going along.' Badri Iamanisdze asked him if he knew it, and he replied, 'Yes, by Heaven, I do.'

When Usib held out this hope Badri Iamanisdze rejoiced that he knew the road, and we set off. We travelled on, and then presently Usib said, 'Here we have before us three days' journey among beasts.' We went on, and after a time a desolate, forested, rocky tract appeared before us. Usib said, 'The Land of the Beasts stretches onward from here.'

Two lions appeared, and I said, 'Give me the word, and I will slaughter them.' Badri said to me, 'Well, forward!' I went forward and slaughtered them and then came back and made obeisance. Badri gave me thanks. As we went on many beasts came up. A fearful one with a horn on its snout appeared, and Badri Iamanisdze said to us, 'Now watch me attack it!' Usib said, however, 'This one is not for you: make it over to Indo Dchabuki—let them fight it out together!' Badri gave the word, Indo Dchabuki rode forward—and by your head, he killed the beast as if it had been a cat!<sup>2</sup> Usib said, 'By Heaven, the road is hard and grievous, but for such as our lord and his retainer Indo Dchabuki all things are easy!'

We went on and journeyed for a long while; and then there appeared on the plain a beast as big as an elephant. It had—most strangely!—two heads, and from each mouth fire was belching forth. It was dreadful enough! Usib said, 'Oh King, this one is yours: attack it!' Badri replied, 'Now mount this white steed of mine, lure the beast forward—and then you will see how my scimitar cuts.' Usib laughed and said, 'This steed is too swift for

<sup>1</sup> See Introduction, pp. xvi–xviii, xxi.

<sup>2</sup> Recurring formula: cf. pp. 29, 41, 126, &c. Also R 317.

me, and I will not mount it!' However, he did mount the white horse, and then showed himself to the beast, which was in among some reeds.<sup>1</sup> It came charging at him, and he fled before it. As he drew near Badri he cried out, 'Now is the time to give me aid, oh King!' Thereupon Badri Iamanisdze charged, came up, struck the beast with his scimitar and cleft it in two. And by your head, the scimitar swept on right into the ground! Then Usib cried out, 'Blessed is your right arm, for it makes this hard road easy for us!'

We went on, and then after we had journeyed for two days we saw a man standing upon a hill: he cried out to us, 'Come—make haste!' He had one serpent in his hands, while a second was coiled round his waist. He hurled at us the one in his hands and went off.<sup>2</sup> We went on too and journeyed for a short while. We looked down from another hill, and saw two huge dragons lying, one black and one white. Badri Iamanisdze said, 'I will attack the black and you three shall take the white.' Usib replied, 'I am going to leave my part to you!' Then Badri Iamanisdze took his long-sword<sup>3</sup> and charged the black dragon, while Indo Dchabuki charged the white.

The black dragon came charging down to swallow Badri. Enraged; Badri Iamanisdze thrust his long-sword at the gaping mouth: it went in and pinned the dragon to the ground. Then he killed it. Next the white charged Indo Dchabuki, engulfed him to the waist and made off. Seeing what had happened, Badri Iamanisdze came up, struck the dragon with his scimitar, cut it in two, and killed it also. Then he said, 'Brother, help me in the same fashion if ever I am in such straits.' And Indo Dchabuki replied, 'Thanks be to God that he has made such a peerless dchabuki of you!'

We passed out of the Land of the Beasts—and presently we saw in front of us three thousand picked Abyssinians, an armed guard keeping watch upon the road. They must have been expecting us, for the moment we appeared they charged. We charged them likewise.—May God treat those who are false to you as did we those guards! We slaughtered all of them.

We went on, and presently came to a sea-coast on which there stood a beautiful little city with fine-looking folk, who all came out

<sup>1</sup> Reed-beds appear to be conventional lurking-places for wild beasts. Cf. pp. 168, 175, 176. Also R 887, 1306, 1309-10.

<sup>2</sup> Observe the verbal similarities between this passage and that which tells of the encounter with men upon lions (p. 28). On the present episode, see Introduction, p. xxi.

<sup>3</sup> *Khisti*, a straight-bladed sword. The more usual weapon is a scimitar.

to meet us and sang our praises. They brought us gifts each day. After we had spent three days there in that city, taking our ease, we went down to the sea-shore. Then Usib told us, 'We must remain here for a day: a host beyond number and beyond all imagining will come here in boats, with a huge ruddy-faced man as its chief. Now this host has weapons that could cleave through our bodies, but our weapons could not cleave theirs. If you can kill their chief, they will all vanish, but there is no other hope.'

We went [? along the coast]<sup>1</sup> for one day—and then presently Usib said, 'Here comes the host!' And on they came, countless. They loosed arrows at us and pressed us hard. Badri Iamanisdze shouted, 'Hide in [the bottom of] the boats!'<sup>2</sup> We did so—and then the chief approached, shouting, 'Where have you hidden yourselves?' As he neared us Badri Iamanisdze jumped into his boat, struck that ruddy-faced chief with his scimitar, and killed him. At that the rest of the host vanished.<sup>3</sup>

We got across the sea safely, and on the other side came to an island, the land of the King of the Seas. Twenty thousand villages did we see on the coast: a beautiful land it was, the like of which has not been seen by the eye of man. Badri Iamanisdze was much delighted with it.

We journeyed on for three days—and then Usib said, 'Here we need a guard.' I was appointed. It is not fitting to sing one's own praises, but I did not fare badly. In the morning the king<sup>4</sup> saw that I had slaughtered huge numbers of men, and he gave me thanks.

We journeyed on that day—and at dusk Usib said, 'Here we need a guard.' He himself stood on guard, and much fighting came his way. In the morning Badri gave him thanks, and we went on. [At dusk] Usib said, 'Here we need a guard'—and Badri said to Indo Dchabuki, 'Tonight the guard is yours.' Indo stood on guard, great hosts came, and he slaughtered large numbers. Badri gave him thanks, and we went on for a fourth day.

Upon a plain we came to some trees with a pleasant stream flowing beneath them,<sup>5</sup> and Badri Iamanisdze said, 'This will be

<sup>1</sup> This seems inconsistent with what Usib has just said.

<sup>2</sup> We must assume that Badri and his companions have fought their way on board one of the vessels.

<sup>3</sup> This motif of the vanishing of a magical host on the killing of an associated figure is recurrent: cf. pp. 34, 103, 105, 119, 196. Vanishing is implied even when not specifically mentioned.

<sup>4</sup> Sc. Badri.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. the similar formulas on pp. 36, 73, 120, 135, &c.



our resting-place for tonight.' And we halted there and drank wine. Presently Usib rose, filled a goblet, and said to 'Badri Iamanisdze, 'Lion of lions, if you so please, tonight the guard will be yours.' And with that he proffered the goblet.<sup>1</sup> Badri drank and said, 'We must be in grave peril—but you may sleep soundly none the less!'

At nightfall he mounted his white steed. As he moved off, Indo Dchabuki looked after him and said, 'I can only pity the man who could have any fears with him as a companion!' Badri stood on guard that night, and never a noise or a murmur did we hear: but when morning came we saw that he had slaughtered as many as the rest of us together three times over! We made him obeisance, and sang his praises. Then Usib said, 'There are no more dangers upon the road.' And we made for the city.<sup>2</sup>

Here is the battle of Badri Iamanisdze and  
Mokle Dchabuki

In the morning, when the sun had put forth its light, the King [of the Seas] seated himself in the same place as before,<sup>3</sup> placed his barons around him, and held a feast. Minstrels sang and tumblers performed.<sup>4</sup> All the peoples [of the realm] came out on to the walls. Clarions and tabors were sounded,<sup>5</sup> and there was much noise inside the city. Out came the champion<sup>6</sup> whom they called Mokle Dchabuki:<sup>7</sup> so huge was he that no notion can be given of him! Then Badri Iamanisdze mounted: clarions and tabors were sounded, and then they circled round each other at the gallop, shouted, charged, and engaged. Far different was this battle from the first<sup>3</sup>—now that one seemed like the play of little children! It lasted from morning until dusk: hard fought it was! At length Badri Iamanisdze drew off his horse and charged—but now,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the other instances of this goblet-ritual on pp. 158, 186, 222.

<sup>2</sup> Sc. the capital of the King of the Seas.

<sup>3</sup> We must postulate the loss of passages describing Badri's arrival in the capital of the King of the Seas, and his first battle there. Brosset's MS. contained such. Brosset, col. 12.

<sup>4</sup> In the original this formula contains only one verb, *mġerdes*, (*mġera* 'playing', 'singing'). Cf. R 119 and *Chronicle*, p. 303, lines 9-10.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Shāhnāma* (W), i, p. 381; ii, pp. 174, 241, 246, &c.: *Chronicle*, p. 299, lines 10-11: also *Roland*, p. 260, lines 3137-8:

Par tute l'ost funt lur taburs suner

E cez buisines e cez greisles mult cler . . .

<sup>6</sup> *Bumberazi* frequently signifies 'giant'. In our text, however, it denotes a warrior who serves for pay, usually by fighting in single combat. Cf. pp. 46, 74, 127-31, 153, &c.

<sup>7</sup> Literally, 'the short dchabuki'.

resolutely and without warning a retainer of Mokle's came at Badri Iamanisdze and struck him with his scimitar. Indo Dchabuki, however, quick to see what had happened, struck the retainer on the helmet<sup>1</sup> with his scimitar, killed him instantly—and then said [to the corpse], 'Brother, leave them to decide this business themselves!'

When he saw what Indo Dchabuki had done, Badri Iamanisdze wheeled about, charged, and shouted, 'Now watch me, Indo Dchabuki!' Then he struck Mokle's helmet with his scimitar, split open his head, and killed him, cleaving him to the breast and flattening him down over the pommel of his saddle. The townsfolk cried out, shouting, 'Blessed is your right arm and your prowess!'—and showered drachmas, jewels, and dinars upon Badri's head.<sup>2</sup> Usib dismounted and began to stow these away in his bosom, saying, 'He is going to get married—so why should we not have these drachmas, dinars, and jewels?'

The king smote his knees, jumped up, withdrew, went into [his palace], and asked, 'Who is this man who has slain my champions?' He was much grieved, but for all that he gave Badri fine raiment and praised his victory—he could do nothing else. Then the King of the Seas called together his barons and sat in council. Presently he sent a man to his daughter with this message: 'My child, I am grown old, and you are the heir to my realm, for I have no child but you.<sup>3</sup> We have been seeking for a husband for you such as none could stand against—and now, child, to be brief, the deeds of this dchabuki are deeds enough! It is vain to fight with him, and you must take him for a husband.'

And this was the curt answer she sent: 'While I can still think that there may be some other man who could stand against him, or that there may even be upon the earth someone who could vanquish him, I do not want to take any man for a husband!<sup>4</sup> Let the third [champion] do battle with him too, and if he vanquishes that one as well I will obey your command.'

<sup>1</sup> *Čabalakhi* properly connotes a head-covering of mail.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Chronicle*, p. 120, line 13, where the crowd showers drachmas and dinars upon the head of the victorious King Vakhtang Gurgaslani: also *ibid.*, p. 224, lines 11 and 10 from foot, and *Shāhnāma* (W), ii, p. 221; iii, p. 106; iv, p. 255; vii, p. 357.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the position of the two heroines in 'The Man of the Panther-skin': R 33, 36, 312, 317. Cf. also *Chronicle*, p. 37, lines 7–8; p. 59, line 6.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Nestan's command to Taniel in her first letter to win her favour by martial prowess. R 366.

This message grieved the king and all the barons, but there was nothing they could do. And so the King of the Seas sent a man [to Badri] with raiment and this message: 'God knows this is not of my choosing; you will understand for yourself whose choice it is. —You and Arzamaniki must do battle: if you win, you will be my son-in-law and even as a real son to me.'

Badri Iamanisdze sent back this answer: 'Oh King, if you had me slaughter those [first two] men because you had grown weary of them, you had good reason, for they were worthless! And now you are weary of this one also! Well, you have given your command, and by Heaven we will fight! Indeed, even had you not so commanded, I could not have let him escape without battle.'

*The Battle of Badri Iamanisdze and  
the Champion Arzamaniki*

The King of the Seas went and seated himself in the same place as before, placed the queen and his radiant daughter at his side, and [ranged round about him] all the barons. We saw that the king's daughter was wearing purple with gold brocade, and thought, 'No mortal creature is she, but the sun itself!' All the townsfolk, high and low alike, took their places—and they wept for Badri Iamanisdze's sake.

Badri Iamanisdze put on his armour and went out into the maidan,<sup>1</sup> arriving there before Arzamaniki had appeared. The barons went and implored the king's daughter, 'Do not have this man, your betrothed husband,<sup>2</sup> fight—and so be the cause of his death!' But they had no success. Then they went and implored Arzamaniki not to come out. But he was annoyed at this, and came out. He sent an iron pole ten cubits long over [to Badri] with this message: 'Today let us fight with these.' Badri Iamanisdze took it, they circled round each other at the gallop, shouted, and engaged. Far different was this from the earlier battles!<sup>3</sup> The fighting lasted from morning until dusk, but neither could vanquish the other. At length they separated and returned to the city. Then the barons went and said to the king, 'These men have no equal!—Do not have them continue fighting just because they have not reached a decision!' Well pleased would the king have been to have had them cease fighting, but unless his daughter so willed, that could not be.

That night as we sat feasting with Badri Iamanisdze an attendant came and asked for Usib. Usib went out and was gone for some

<sup>1</sup> (*moedam*): Persian, as also Anglo-Indian, *maidān*. An open space in or near a city used for martial exercises, &c. In our text it usually figures as a battleground.

<sup>2</sup> The portion which was surmised above (p. 18, n. 3) may perhaps have told of some sort of conditional betrothal. Other princesses, however, are also spoken of as 'betrothed' in apparently somewhat arbitrary fashion. Cf. pp. 105-6, 143, 225.

<sup>3</sup> Sc., much fiercer.

time. Presently he came in again and said, 'Your bride has sent you a horse!' Badri rejoiced as though he had been given the whole earth. The attendant was summoned, and was brought in with the horse, which was covered with a housing of cloth of gold—never has the eye of man seen anything so beautiful! There was too this message: 'Your white steed is tired and battle-worn: now fight Arzamaniki on this one—let me have proof of your worth!'<sup>1</sup>

Badri sent back this message of thanks: 'You have given me this command, "With the aid of this [horse] quit yourself better before me!"—I must have won your favour yesterday! Watch me next time, oh my soul!<sup>2</sup> You and the king both desire the death of Arzamaniki, so I will kill him.—What more do you desire?'

In the morning Badri Iamanisdze sent a man to the King of the Seas with this message: 'Oh King, yesterday's battle was mere trifling and led to no decision.—Now send out Arzamaniki: let him cover over the weak places with an iron<sup>3</sup> breastplate, and I shall do the same. Let us get a decision quickly!' The king and everyone else wondered at the eagerness of Badri Iamanisdze. Presently the king sent a message inquiring if he would be ready for battle on the following day.

That night as we sat feasting the same attendant as before came and asked for Usib. When [the two of them] came in again they presented Badri with a scimitar, saying, 'She who is your very soul sends you this, with this message: "Tomorrow you and Arzamaniki are going to do battle together. Since you want to reach a decision, reach it with this scimitar—gird it to your waist: by Heaven, it will prove scimitar enough!"' Badri rejoiced greatly and sent back his thanks, with this message: 'Watch me tomorrow and see if it is a poor husband they have chosen for you!'<sup>4</sup>

#### *The second battle of Badri Iamanisdze and Arzamaniki*

In the morning, when the sun's light had showed forth, the king and queen seated themselves in the same place as before, and set

<sup>1</sup> The episode in R 363-6 in which Nestan sends a message to Tariel by night, urging him to go out and do battle and to give her cause to think well of him, may very possibly have been inspired by this passage.

<sup>2</sup> *mzeo čemo*. Literally, 'oh my sun!' *Mze*, 'sun', is very commonly used in our text and elsewhere in medieval Georgian as a trope for 'life'.

<sup>3</sup> *rkineni*. Through some aberration this word appears in this formula throughout our text as *kineni*, which means 'spear'.

<sup>4</sup> This message lends some support to the hypothesis of a conditional betrothal.

their daughter between them. She was dressed in something shimmering—and I swear by the living God that the sun itself did not outdo her! The king placed his barons round about him and held a feast. Minstrels sang and all the onlookers took their places. From terrace to terrace<sup>1</sup> clarions and tabors were sounded, and all wept, for they thought that Arzamaniki would win. Then Arzamaniki came out, armed and with the weak places of both himself and his horse covered with iron plating.<sup>2</sup> By your head, he was fearful enough! Badri Iamanisdze came out girt with three scimitars, as was his custom.

They circled round each other at the gallop, shouted, charged, and engaged: by your head, the first battle had not been anything like this—never have I seen such fighting! There was fierce battle from morning until dusk, and the noise of clarions and tabors was never out of our ears! At length, after each had shivered two scimitars upon the other, Usib cried out to Badri Iamanisdze, 'Look first upon her who is your soul, and then bethink you of her scimitar!'

At these words Badri Iamanisdze drew off his horse, wheeled round swiftly, cried out, 'Now behold the keenness of Badri Iamanisdze's scimitar!'—drew out his third scimitar,<sup>3</sup> and charged. Stricken with terror, Arzamaniki fled, but Badri Iamanisdze overtook him, struck him on the back with his scimitar, cleft him so that [a part of] his body splayed out over either hip, and killed him.

The king jumped up, clapped his hands, and laughed. In the city there was great rejoicing, and all sang the praises of Badri Iamanisdze: the whole city brought him gifts and made him obeisance. Presently the king and queen summoned us, and we went to them. They came to meet us, and sang Badri's praises to his face. That same day the wedding was celebrated. A gleaming throne was brought forth, and on it the bridegroom and the bride

<sup>1</sup> *Bani* means primarily 'flat roof', and by extension can also signify 'terrace' (e.g. R 1090, 1253). In our text, however, it generally denotes the vantage-point—presumably a platform of some kind—from which persons of distinction watch battles. 'Dais', by which the word in this sense is rendered in the translation, is open to the objection that it suggests an indoor structure, but no more satisfactory alternative presents itself.

<sup>2</sup> *Politikni (r)kineni*: commonly rendered elsewhere as 'iron breastplate'. In view of the fact that it invariably appears in the plural, it is arguable that it should be rendered 'iron plating' in all cases. Brosset took this as its regular sense. Brosset, col. 15. Cf. pp. 57, 78, 122, 161, &c. The formula is usually applied to the rider only.

<sup>3</sup> Sc. the one sent him by the princess.

seated themselves together.<sup>1</sup> Those who saw them said, 'There can be none to excel such a bridegroom and such a bride!' The king made over to them all his cities, his countless stores of treasure and hundreds of keys—one key only did he retain for himself. And we spent a month amid all this rejoicing and gaiety.

The King of the Seas sent messengers with a summons to all his cities and provinces. Two hundred thousand armed warriors came, all bringing gifts worthy of a king's treasure. Every day there were festivities, feasting, and diversions. Countless were the gifts bestowed! The king took off his crown and placed it on the head of Badri Iamanisdze, and then he bestowed gifts of all kinds upon that dchabuki, made over likewise to his wife<sup>2</sup> the queen all his treasures, and gave a blessing to his reign. Badri Iamanisdze, however, took off the crown and placed it on the king's head, saying, 'May God spare you to reign a thousand<sup>3</sup> years: the kingship is yours, and so is the crown—take it on your own head. My life and happiness lie in your enjoying yourself according to your pleasure.' Much pleased was the King of the Seas by this.

Presently Badri Iamanisdze began to say to himself, 'I sought occasions for prowess, and now I have indeed proved myself, and become king of a foreign realm—yet my own dominions do not know how things stand with me! Now what am I to do?' And he fell into melancholy.

One day when the King of the Seas and Badri Iamanisdze were sitting feasting the King of the Seas asked, 'Why are you so melancholy?' At first Badri would say nothing, but the king went on, 'If you want to go to your dominions, well, go! Spend your time there when you choose, and pass it here when you choose—for now you are king of this land of ours!' At this Badri Iamanisdze rejoiced and said, 'Usib, now we are going to quit this hall<sup>4</sup>—by Heaven, glad will I be to leave!' Then the king laughed and said, 'It must be an ill-conditioned family Badri Iamanisdze comes from!' To this Usib replied, 'Truly, they are ill-mannered one and all!' Thus they joked, and Badri Iamanisdze said, 'Indeed, I am just as Usib describes me!' Then the King of the Seas said, 'Make ready quickly,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the placing of a bridal pair on a single throne in *Shāhnāma* (W), i, p. 318.

<sup>2</sup> Sc. Badri's wife.

<sup>3</sup> Reading *at'assave* for *at'save*. Cf. R 1521.

<sup>4</sup> *Sakhli* is the usual word in Georgian for 'house'. In this translation, however, 'hall' is frequently preferred, as being more appropriate to the residences of monarchs and dchabukis.

take this wife of yours with you—and go! Badri Iamanisdze rejoiced greatly. Then the King of the Seas bestowed upon him raiment and precious stuffs, many drachmas, jewels, and pearls, a hundred camels, three thousand mules, countless treasures, and a thousand warriors. And so we came away.

We crossed the sea: upon the coast we found a fair city, and there made a halt. Usib said to Indo Dchabuki, 'This is not a good place to stop at!'—But we did not venture to tell Badri Iamanisdze that it was not a place to make a halt in. Badri Iamanisdze saw the host encamped and then settled himself down on the maidan. Indo Dchabuki, Usib, and I were close at hand, and he had the queen by him as well. Usib said to Indo Dchabuki, 'This is the Land of the Devis;<sup>1</sup> we must be on our guard!' But they said nothing to Badri. Then at midnight Baqbaq Devi<sup>2</sup> came, seized Badri Iamanisdze while he lay asleep, and carried him off. Badri's wife the queen he left. And we knew nothing of what had happened.

When day had broken we were stricken with terror, and did not know what to do.<sup>3</sup> Tumult arose in the host as the grievous news spread. We could not understand how Badri had disappeared! Indo Dchabuki went off, but while he was searching for Badri he too disappeared.—We turned about and took the queen back to the King of the Seas. There was weeping and sorrow, and the King of the Seas said, 'Would that we knew how to rescue him!' He sent out a host, but it did not even manage to enter [the Land of the Devis]—the Devis slaughtered and routed it. And indeed, there was no getting into that land for any army!

Then the king said, 'I have thought of a plan.' The barons replied, 'Tell us of it, oh King, whatever it may be.' He went on, 'We will send messengers to Nosar Nisreli, the man who wrote that he was coming to marry my daughter. He is our only hope.' Then they all agreed that there was nothing else for them to try, and they summoned Usib and me and sent us off to Nosar Nisreli with a message telling of all that had happened.

We went, and found Nosar sitting in a garden feasting, with his barons ranged round about him and minstrels singing. When he learned of our coming he summoned us, and we went up and made him obeisance. He bade us come close, told us to sit down, and asked why we were wearing black. When we had told him every-

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A, p. 235.

<sup>2</sup> See Introduction, pp. xvii–xviii, xxii–xxiii.      <sup>3</sup> *Davqaret* disregarded.



thing he turned to his retainer Ali Dilami and said to him, 'You have followed what these men have been saying?' And Ali replied that he had. Then Nosar said, 'Well, tomorrow we are going to set off to rescue that man!' And by your head, on the following day we did indeed set out, the retainer Ali Dilami going along with us.

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER

### *The Story of Nosar Nisreli*

We set out and journeyed for three days. Now, Tartars<sup>1</sup> had come and burned and plundered<sup>2</sup> Nosar's capital—for it was small and unwallled. Upon the road we met with a weeping man, who kept repeating, 'Alas, where were you, Nosar Nisreli, while unclean men were plundering your city!' Nosar heard this, and asked him when this had happened; and the man replied, 'Alas, today.'

We turned about and started to hasten back—and then, looking down, we saw a great host streaming down into a plain. Nosar said to us, 'Now watch me, [and judge] whether I shall be able to rescue your lord!' He mounted his steed, went forward by himself, and overtook the host. By your head, no one has ever seen such a battle! He slaughtered and routed them so as to bring down the wrath of God upon them.<sup>3</sup> Usib said, 'We can set our minds at rest—easy will it be for this man to rescue our lord!'

We sang Nosar's praises, and then went on. Presently Nosar asked us, 'Do you know the road?'—and we replied, 'We know [of two], one long and safe, the other short and hard. We shall take which you choose.' Nosar said, 'Let us take the shorter.'

We went on, and travelled the distance of twenty days' journey. Wherever beasts or hosts threatened us, Nosar slaughtered and routed them, and then we would go on. One day, however, when we were confronted by a very great host, Ali Dilami said, 'I saw it [first!]<sup>4</sup>—and Nosar told him to go and deal with it. Ali charged, and the host did the same. By your head, but that day's battle

<sup>1</sup> Tartars, of course, cannot have figured in a twelfth-century Georgian text. The casualness with which the word *t'at'ari* is used here suggests that it found its way into the text at a period when the Mongol domination in Georgia, effectively over by the end of the first quarter of the fourteenth century, was a distant memory.

<sup>2</sup> In the text *datqvenva*, 'plunder', has been corrupted into *datqveva*, 'take captive'.

<sup>3</sup> This formula, frequent in our text, has an echo in R 1391.

<sup>4</sup> Thus claiming the right to make the attack.

would have delighted you! We said, 'Let us go to the help of that retainer!' But Nosar replied, 'If he is still the same Ali Dilami as he used to be, he will not stand in need of any help!' And, indeed, Ali slaughtered and routed that host so that those who were watching him wondered if his lord himself could have done better. Then he returned, and Nosar Nisreli gave him thanks.

After we had journeyed on for three days we saw on another hill three men mounted upon lions. One of them said to the others, 'Look, Usib is bringing along someone he has tricked!' Then they shouted to us, 'Come on, make haste—but you won't succeed in getting beyond here!'<sup>1</sup> At that Nosar Nisreli mounted his black steed, went forward by himself, telling us to stay behind, and rode over the hill. A long time passed, and then Ali Dilami said, 'Let us go and see what Nosar Nisreli has been doing.' We went up on to the hill, and there we saw countless slaughtered horses and men lying on the ground. Those three men who had been mounted on the lions had also been slaughtered, but of Nosar Nisreli we could find no trace. And so we fell into deep gloom and bitter grief.<sup>2</sup>

After some time, however, Nosar Nisreli came up: with him he brought a captive—and truly a strange man it was we now beheld! For he had two faces, one black and one blood-red. With the black he spoke Persian and with the red [in some tongue] we could not understand. He implored us, 'Do not kill me—every creed commands faith in God, and I call Him to witness that I will be of great service to you!' Then Usib said to him, 'Rest assured that we are going to kill you!' The man was terrified at this, but Nosar Nisreli said, 'Do not be frightened, brother—he is joking. Now call God to witness that you will not deceive me—for that would be the only way you could harm me!' And the man swore in God's name.

The Two-Faced Man told us, 'There are two enormous birds here, and there is no fighting with them!' We went on, and journeyed over a plain, Nosar Nisreli going along by himself, while Ali Dilami, Usib, and I went together. Presently one of the birds came swooping down over us three, and at that Usib cried out, 'Come to our aid, Nosar Nisreli!' Nosar charged up on his horse, struck the bird with his scimitar before it could pounce on us, and

<sup>1</sup> The interpretation of this sentence is doubtful.

<sup>2</sup> In the text an inapposite heading, 'The capture of Nosar Nisreli', occurs here.

killed it like a cat.<sup>1</sup> We looked at it—it was the size of an elephant! The Two-Faced Man was amazed, and said, 'Can there be another dchabuki like him upon the earth?' As for the other bird—it must have been somewhere else.<sup>2</sup>

We went on, and when we had reached our [next] halting-place the Two-Faced Man said, 'Here we need a guard.' I was appointed. That night hosts came up, and single-handed I slaughtered large numbers. In the morning we went on—and at the [next] halt Usib was appointed guard for the night. He did very well—of Usib I must tell you that if he was weak in body,<sup>3</sup> no man could have a stouter heart. The [next] day we went on—and [when we came to make our halt] the Two-Faced Man said, 'Here we need a very good guard.' And Ali Dilami stood [on guard]. Immense hosts came up—but his deeds befitted his prowess, and he slaughtered and routed them so as to bring down the wrath of God upon them.

We went on, and journeyed for three days. Presently a castle appeared before us, and Nosar Nisreli asked whose it was. The Two-Faced Man replied, 'It belongs to the Devis, and inside it they hold captive that lion of lions, Badri Iamanisdze.' Nosar Nisreli was eager to break into it there and then, and declared, 'I am determined to release him before I do anything else!' However, we made a halt for the night. The Two-Faced Man said to him, 'Here you must stand on guard.' And Nosar Nisreli stood [on guard] alone.

The treacherous seizing by Baqbaq Devi and Khazaran<sup>4</sup>  
Devi of Nosar Nisreli while he lay asleep

The Two-Faced Man said to Nosar, 'Take care lest you fall asleep.' And then Nosar went off. That night hosts came up, and we heard the noise of battle until cock-crow. Then when the fighting was over, and Nosar Nisreli, being weary, had fallen asleep, the two Devi brothers, Baqbaq and Khazaran, came up, cut out a

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the story in the *Shāhnāma* of the Simurgh's attack, and its killing: *Shāhnāma* (W), v, p. 133.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, 'it was not at home, as it seemed'.

<sup>3</sup> This reference to weakness is one of the many obscurities which surround the figure of Usib.

<sup>4</sup> ? Derived from Persian *Khazrān*, 'the Caspian'. The province of Māzandarān, on the shores of this sea, is the stronghold of the Persian Divs. Rustam's adventure with the White Div (see *note E*, p. 233) occurs during a campaign against the Divs of Māzandarān. C. Huart and L. Delaporte, *L'Iran antique*, Paris, 1943, pp. 410, 458.

piece of turf<sup>1</sup> as big as a threshing-floor, and then went off, bearing Nosar Nisreli with them.

When day had broken we beheld a great host of slaughtered warriors—but nowhere could we find Nosar Nisreli: and we were plunged into bitter grief. Ali Dilami went off—but he too disappeared while searching for Nosar.<sup>2</sup>

Usib said, 'If only we had killed this Two-Faced Man, all would still be well with us!' Thereupon the Two-Faced Man retorted, 'What have I done, you husband of a turtle!'<sup>3</sup>; reviled him, and went off. Usib said, 'He is to blame for all our misfortunes!'<sup>4</sup>

Then we went to Iaman Dchabuki's<sup>5</sup> abode, and found him in deep grief. He it was who sent me to you with this message: 'Amiran Darejanisdze, illustrious beyond all others, lion of lions! I am an old man, and no longer have the strength for battle with enemies—though there was a time, I call God to witness, when I should not have needed to beg for deeds of prowess from any! But now such things are beyond me.—My son Badri has been seized by Devis, and that lion of lions, Nosar Nisreli, who went to look for him has, for my sins, most lamentably been seized likewise. Now they have no hope but you: quit yourself as [the fame of] your prowess leads [us] to expect!'

Then Amiran Darejanisdze said, 'First, you can rest assured that I will indeed set out.—Now, ought we to wait for Aban Kabanisdze,<sup>6</sup> Ali Momadisdze,<sup>7</sup> Asan<sup>8</sup> Badridze, Qamar Qamareli, and Kowos Kosidze,<sup>9</sup> or should we set out by ourselves?' And I replied, 'Amiran Darejanisdze, may you live for ever! Since you have determined to set out, make haste—for if we do not get there soon they may slaughter those dchabukis!'

<sup>1</sup> Literally, 'ground'.

<sup>2</sup> Observe the correspondence with Indo Dchabuki's disappearance while searching for Badri (p. 25).

<sup>3</sup> Sc. loose woman.

<sup>4</sup> Reading *ai* for *ar*.

<sup>5</sup> In the popular tradition Iaman figures sometimes as the father of Badri, Usib, and Amiran. (On occasion as the foster-father of the last.) Bleichsteiner, p. 13.

<sup>7</sup> (Muhammad-isdze).

<sup>6</sup> *K'abanisdze*.

<sup>8</sup> (Hasan).

<sup>9</sup> *K'oōs K'osidze* (Kāus Kāus-idze).

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*The Story of Amiran Darejanisdze*


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Great King of Kings, may you live for ever! May God prosper your friends and bring confusion upon those who are false to you!—The following day we set out, Amiran Darejanisdze himself, I myself, Savarsamidze, and that man in black<sup>1</sup>—and after journeying for not a few days we arrived at the abode of Iaman Dchabuki. He came out to meet us, a fine-looking old man who must have been a lion-dchabuki once. He wept bitterly as he said, 'No more can I say to you than this: do what you think best—you are now my only hope!' Amiran Darejanisdze replied, 'No more can I promise you than this: I will either die with them or rescue them.' And we stayed there for one day.

We asked for a guide, and they gave us Usib. We set out upon the road, and after journeying for twelve days arrived at the place where they had seized that lion of lions Badri Iamanisdze. Amiran Darejanisdze dismounted and wept bitterly. We went on, journeyed for three days—and then the Two-Faced Man came up to us, made obeisance to Amiran Darejanisdze and said, 'I gave Nosar Nisreli my oath, and I will not break it, even though I was not able to serve him [to much purpose]. And now, since you are going to look for him, I am your man,<sup>2</sup> and I will serve you in every way I can.' Then Usib said to him, 'So you are here, you bullock and murderer!' Amiran Darejanisdze was annoyed with Usib, and said to the Two-Faced Man, 'Bless you, brother—and now come along with us.' And we set off, with him as our guide.

King of Kings, give ear! Presently a lofty castle appeared before us, and Amiran Darejanisdze asked whose it was. The Two-Faced Man replied, 'It belongs to the Devis, and those lions Ali Dilami

<sup>1</sup> Sc. the narrator of the events recounted in the three preceding chapters.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, 'my heart beats together with yours'. Reading *damicems* for *mec damic*.

and Indo Dchabuki are inside it. After their lords had been seized they overtook the Devis, and fought fiercely: but they were captured by some piece of sorcery or other, and now they lie in that castle.'

We spent that night near<sup>1</sup> the castle, and then when day had broken Amiran Darejanisdze put on armour for foot-fighting.

Amiran Darejanisdze's storming of the Devis' castle and  
his rescue of Ali Dilami and Indo Dchabuki

When day had broken Amiran took his shield and went up to<sup>2</sup> the castle. Warriors appeared above [on the battlements], hurled stones, and uttered fearful yells. Shattering the castle gates, he stormed his way in, slaughtered, massacred, and captured the castle. Inside he found the prisoners Ali and Indo Dchabuki, and set them free. As they were much weakened he left them there in the castle and told the man in black to stay with them. He sealed up the doors of the treasure-chambers,<sup>3</sup> and then we went off, we three<sup>4</sup> and the Two-Faced Man. Presently we came to the place where they had seized Nosar Nisreli, and there we could see where the turf had been cut away. The Two-Faced Man pointed it out to us, saying, 'That is where they seized Nosar Nisreli.' We went on, and then presently the Two-Faced Man said, 'I do not know the way beyond here, and I am not going to go any farther: I do know that after three days' journey you will reach a forest which has in it all kinds of beasts: but once you have passed through that you will have to look out for yourselves, for my knowledge goes no farther.' Then Usib said, 'What way is this for a guide to behave!' And we made that Two-Faced Man continue on the way with us. Presently we came to the forest—and by God in Heaven and Your Majesty's head, we killed five hundred lions and panthers there! We passed out of it and came to wide, measureless waters on which there rode a ship with sailors.

We drew near, and when the sailors saw us they came up, made obeisance to us, and asked if we were from court.<sup>5</sup> We

<sup>1</sup> Literally, 'at the foot of . . . '.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, 'to the foot of . . . '.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 34; also, although there is here no mention of sealing-up, p. 36. Cf. also R 1348, 1474.

<sup>4</sup> Sc. Amiran, Savarsamidze, and Usib.

<sup>5</sup> The meaning of the inquiry is presumably, in effect, 'Are you men of consequence such as it behoves us to assist?'

replied that we were, and thereupon they invited us to embark. We did so, and seated ourselves in the ship. We put out on to the water—and then in the middle of it sailors and ship vanished, while we were left. Then Amiran put one arm round me and the other round Usib, and, swimming, brought us to the far [shore].<sup>1</sup> He said to us, 'By Heaven, we have escaped a great peril!'

We went on, and presently came to a great rock with a cave in it. A Dido<sup>2</sup> clad in red came out from the rock and said, 'Hail, Amiran Darejanisdze!' Amiran first picked him up, then put him down again gently, saying, 'You are light indeed!<sup>3</sup> Pray who are you?' Usib said, 'By Heaven, he is nothing—the most wretched of all men!' The Dido replied, 'Usib, the blame for all these misfortunes lies with you, and the capture of those lion-men<sup>4</sup> was your fault—and now you are guide to this dchabuki!' Then Usib said, 'Ah, what a miserable and evil man you are! Why should I be [blamed]?''

Amiran Darejanisdze said, 'Tell me, brother, who you are.' The man replied, 'I was the Dido king, but the Devis slaughtered my host and drove me out—I alone survive.' Usib said, 'Since you were such a wretch and brought such dishonour upon kingship, it would have been better had you not!' Then the Dido king went on, 'Wherever you are going now, I can be of help to you, if you are a good dchabuki. Promise to restore my land to me and I will serve you well.' Amiran Darejanisdze said to him, 'By God in Heaven, I will give you your dominions back!' And on we went, taking the Dido king along with us.

We journeyed on, and presently we came to a very rocky tract with a deep valley in it out of which there rose a lofty and steep mountain covered with fearful rocks. On the top of one of these rocks there appeared a huge serpent, which began to wriggle—and after that countless serpents began to come up from all over the earth.<sup>5</sup> We slaughtered them, grew weary of slaughtering, yet their

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the somewhat similar feats on pp. 147 and 181–2.

<sup>2</sup> See note D, pp. 232–3.

<sup>3</sup> Unless the point of this episode is to illustrate Amiran's strength (see last note) we must assume that its purpose is to inform us that the man in red had wasted away in his miserable condition.

<sup>4</sup> Sc. Badri and Nosar.

<sup>5</sup> Or possibly 'land'. Here, as in some other instances in our text, *k'veqana* is ambiguous.



numbers were not exhausted. At last Amiran Darejanisdze took aim with his bow, drew the string, loosed an arrow, and shot away the head of the serpent which was sitting on top of the rock.<sup>1</sup> And at that the flow of serpents ceased.

A man came out to that spot<sup>2</sup> and shouted to us, 'Now you will learn whether you have gained anything by killing that serpent!' A second man came out and asked, 'Have they killed our servant?' [The first] replied, 'They have!' Then the two of them came down and opened doors in the rock—and out came three fearful dragons, one black, one white, and one red.<sup>3</sup>

Here is Amiran Darejanisdze's battle with the dragons

Then Amiran Darejanisdze said, 'The black to me, the white to you, Savarsamidze, and the red to Usib.' Usib, however, replied, 'I leave my share to you!' The dragons charged us, and we them. When the red came up, Amiran Darejanisdze struck it with his scimitar, and killed it. Then I and he engaged the white, and he struck it and killed it likewise. Then the black charged up from behind, swallowed Amiran Darejanisdze, and made off. I overtook it, struck it with my scimitar, and cut off its tail—but it escaped into a building nearby. Not having seen where it had gone, we began to weep bitterly.

Now it was Amiran Darejanisdze's habit to keep two daggers in his boots,<sup>4</sup> one in each: he ripped open [the dragon's] belly, cut through its flank, and came out covered with blood. He said to us, 'Small help did I get from you!'—In that building there were countless treasure-chambers, and these we sealed up.

We went on, and for two days we journeyed along a rock-slope. A big man with one eye in his forehead<sup>5</sup> came at me, saying, 'It was an ill day for you when that miserable Usib tricked you into coming this way!' He seized hold of me to lead me away—and then we engaged and fought for a long time. In the end I killed him, then went to Amiran Darejanisdze, told him what had happened, and showed him [the body of] the man. Amiran was amazed, gave me thanks, and said, 'You must have had a hard fight of it with so huge a man!' And after that we went on.

<sup>1</sup> Sc. the first to appear.

<sup>2</sup> Sc. the rock.

<sup>3</sup> On this episode see Introduction, pp. xvii-xviii.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Shāhnāma* (W), iii, p. 302.

<sup>5</sup> On this episode see note E, p. 233.

Amiran Darejanisdze's capture and shutting-up in a cave  
by a huge Devi, and their great battle

King of Kings, give ear, may you live for ever! May God prosper your friends and bring confusion upon those who are false to you!<sup>1</sup> After we had journeyed on for three days we came upon a woman who was sitting bewailing someone or other. We asked her what ailed her, and she inquired of us, 'Are you of our faith?'<sup>2</sup> We replied that we were—and then she said, 'I was thinking of Badri Iamanisdze, and it was his fate that I was bewailing. The Devis carried me off at the same time as they seized him by the power of their sorcery, and since then I have been here, living among those devils. —Now, if you so please, take something to eat.' As we had found no game that day we were hungry. Guided by the woman we went on, and came to the foot of a rock. She opened a door [in the rock], took Amiran Darejanisdze through it—and then closed it by pushing a great boulder up. For she was really a Devi! And we were left outside, in sore distress.

We learned later that when Amiran went in he found a big man with one eye in his forehead on a seat who said to him, 'Hail, Amiran Darejanisdze!—An ill<sup>3</sup> day was it for you when you had the idea of coming here!'

Now it was the way with Amiran Darejanisdze that when he was in straits his strength was much increased. So now he thought to himself, 'Now, lion of lions, Darejanisdze . . .!'—and charged, crying out, 'I rejoice indeed to see you—but it would have been better far for you if I had not!'

A little boy, the Devi's son, came up [? to Amiran from some corner of the cave]—he too had one eye in his forehead. The Devi said, 'I know well that you are going to kill this boy—but put him down by me, and I will kill him myself.' (All this time we were standing outside the door, unable to get in.) Amiran Darejanisdze, however, caught up the little boy by the feet, flung him in his father's face, and then killed him. Then the Devi jumped up, and they fought together. Before long Amiran Darejanisdze managed to lift the Devi up—and then he dashed him to the ground, and gouged out the eye from his forehead with his dagger.<sup>4</sup> The Devi cried out, 'For the fair fame of your prowess, do not kill me!' And,

<sup>1</sup> In the text this formula is placed at the end of the preceding section.

<sup>2</sup> The import of the question is, 'Are you men?' (as opposed to Devis).

<sup>3</sup> Reading *vaglakh* for *ra glakh*.

<sup>4</sup> See note E, p. 233.

indeed, Amiran did not. He seized the Devi-woman who had tricked us, however, said to her, 'You would only trick someone else!'—and killed her. Then he opened the door, and we went in. The Devi still had a little life in him, for Darejanisdze did not want to kill him. Usib, however, struck him with his scimitar and killed him. Amiran Darejanisdze was angry with Usib for doing this, but Usib said, 'Do not be angry, my lord: that sorcerer would only have tricked someone else!'

We found a great store of treasure, and then went on, meeting with no more of such perils upon the road. At length we came to a place where Usib said, 'Here we need a guard.' And he himself stood [on guard] that night. Countless hosts came up, and he did very well. The [next] day we journeyed on, and at night they appointed me guard. Countless hosts came up, and I slaughtered large numbers. So we went on, till one day we came to a place of danger, and that night Amiran Darejanisdze himself stood on guard. Enormous hosts came up, but he slaughtered and routed them. And so we reached the end of our journey and came to do battle with the Devis.

The treacherous coming by night on Amiran Darejanisdze  
while he slept of Baqbaq Devi and his brother Khazaran  
Devi, and the death of Khazaran

That night the two Devi brothers Baqbaq and Khazaran came while [we were] asleep, and cut out [round about Amiran] a piece of turf,<sup>1</sup> as they had done with Nosar. Then Amiran Darejanisdze awoke, sprang up, shouted, leapt on his horse, and charged them furiously. Baqbaq escaped, but Amiran struck Khazaran with his scimitar and killed him.

When day had broken we went on, and presently came to the castle where Badri Iamanisdze and Nosar Nisreli were prisoners. Lofty it was, and impossible for men to storm: there was no way for the sons of men to get into it, and we could do nothing. We stayed there for a week, hoping to seize Baqbaq Devi if he came out—but he did not, and so we were helpless. Then at length Usib said, 'There is nothing for us to do except bring that unclean Dido before our lord.' The Dido came and said, 'Can you do nothing?'—and Amiran replied, 'No.' Then the Dido took us round to the other side of the castle, where there were fine trees, with a delightful stream flowing beneath them.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Literally, 'ground'.

Formula: cf. pp. 73, 135, &c.

Now there was a wondrous bird of huge size that used to come down every day, drink of the water, and then return to the castle.

Amiran Darejanisdze's fight in Baqbaq Devi's castle, the death of Baqbaq Devi, the taking of the castle [? and the delivery] of Badri Iamanisdze and Nosar Nisreli

Oh King, may you live for ever!—The Dido said, 'I have already told you that if you are a good dchabuki, I can help you. Now, when that bird has come, drunk of the water, and is about to fly up, seize hold of its feet and it will carry you aloft and set you down in the castle—there is no other hope.' Then Usib said, 'Ah, you wretch, what an evil man you must be! This plan you put to us is truly worthy of such a man as you!' Amiran Darejanisdze fashioned himself a hiding-place under the trees and sat in it. The bird came down and drank at the water—and then as it rose up, he caught hold of its feet.<sup>1</sup>

The bird set off towards the castle: [those inside] saw it, went to look, cried out, 'Something wondrous is coming!'—and put on their armour. When the bird had carried Amiran Darejanisdze up into the castle they came at him—but he drew out his scimitar, went through them dealing out slaughter, shattered the gates of the castle,<sup>2</sup> and massacred many Devis.

The prisoners realized that something was happening and began to shout, 'Who are you?—open our door too!' When he had slaughtered all [the Devis]<sup>3</sup> he went to the dungeon door, struck it with his scimitar, burst it open, and released them. Then Badri Iamanisdze and Nosar Nisreli joined us, and after that all was easy. These two slaughtered and massacred! Baqbaq Devi tried to escape, but Nosar Nisreli overtook and killed him.

We entered the castle—countless were its treasures! We stayed there for a week, and during that time loaded five hundred camels with treasure. (All the rest—castle, city, and possessions—was made over to the Dido King in reward for his services.) We set out with countless treasures and, travelling by way of the places where

<sup>1</sup> In the Ossetes' *Nart* stories, Batradz is shot on an arrow into a besieged fortress. Bowra, p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> This statement about the gates is probably formulaic. (Cf. pp. 32, 88, 138. Also R 1377, 1392, 1395.) If, however, we are to take it as genuinely part of the narrative, we must suppose that Amiran shatters them in order to let his companions in.

<sup>3</sup> Inconsistent with the further slaughter which follows.

we had killed the Devi-woman and where we had slaughtered the dragons,<sup>1</sup> came to the castle where Ali Dilami and Indo Dchabuki were sojourning. There too we loaded up with countless treasures: and then we went off.

The whole of Arabia, having heard that certain dchabukis were coming with countless treasures and riches that had belonged to dragons and Devis which they had slaughtered, mustered and overtook us with a multitude beyond counting. Then those three lions and we their retainers turned about—and by Your Majesty's head, you could not have determined which of those three did best, which excelled the others! We fought for three days, and then put [the Arabs] to flight, slaughtering them so as to bring down the wrath of God upon them!

Then those three had that stone building put up in that place and had themselves painted,<sup>2</sup> and us their retainers along with them. After that we set out and went to the abode of Iaman Dchabuki, and sojourned there for a week. Those three heroes met together, exchanged oaths of brotherhood—by Your Majesty's head, none was there who could overcome them! Then they divided the treasures into three, and after that each went to his own hall in triumph.

<sup>1</sup> In order to collect the treasures left at these spots (see pp. 34, 36).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the painting of Bahrām Gur's portrait, after his slaying of a lion and an onager, *Haft Paikar* (W), i, p. 51.

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*The Story of Ambri Arabi*<sup>1</sup>


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King of Kings, give ear, may you live for ever! May God prosper your friends and bring confusion upon those who are false to you!—Now as I have already told Your Majesty, my lord Amiran Darejanisdze loved to hear of the exploits of others. Once as we were passing through a narrow street in the city of Baghdad, one of three men who were sitting on a roof-top drinking wine looked down and said, 'Ha—there goes Amiran Darejanisdze! There is not his like upon the face of all the earth!' One of the others agreed, 'Indeed, there is not!' Then the third said to his companions, 'There is no dchabuki upon the earth like Ambri Arabi, and if he wanted to, he could certainly vanquish Amiran.' Amiran Darejanisdze heard this and said to me, 'You heard, Savarsamidze?'—and I replied that I had. Then he ordered, 'Go and bring that man here, for he must tell us about this dchabuki.'

We called the man down, and he came: but when Amiran said to him, 'Brother, tell of Ambri Arabi'—he refused, saying, 'I do not know anything of that dchabuki.' Then Amiran said, 'Yes you do: when you were sitting there drinking with your companions and one of you asked, "Is there any dchabuki like Amiran Darejanisdze?"', and another replied, "There is not!"—you said, "There is not the like of Ambri Arabi in Arabia, and if he wanted to, he could certainly vanquish Amiran."'

Terrified now, the man said, 'I only spoke so because I was drunk.' But when Amiran had adjured him in God's name to tell of the dchabuki, he said, 'Give me your oath that you will do me no harm, and will not be moved to anger against me if I tell you.' Amiran assured him, 'Not only will I not do you any harm, but I give you my oath that I will be well pleased and feel much beholden to you.' And so the man began with his story.

<sup>1</sup> See note F, p. 233.

I shall tell you only of those deeds of Ambri Arabi's which I have witnessed with my own eyes, for those one hears of are beyond number.—Now in Arabia there were two kings, of the same kin, but at enmity one with the other. Every day and at all times there was such fearful strife that no more tremendous fighting could be conceived of by the mind of man! As you well know, the Arabs are<sup>1</sup> [the finest] dchabukis upon the face of all the earth. Thus all Arabia was split into two warring parts. One [of these kings] was the father-in-law of the Khan king,<sup>2</sup> and the other that of the Yemeni king;<sup>3</sup> and the Khan king and the Yemeni king each came to the aid [of his father-in-law]. For many years the fighting went on, but in the end, thanks to the close concert in which the Turks and the Arabs [allied to them] acted, the Khans overcame the Yemenis, after a fierce battle.

The [defeated Arabian] king<sup>4</sup> was driven out, and withdrew to Yemen. With him went one of his barons, by the name of Omar, a lion-dchabuki, mighty and illustrious. No one else of equal note would follow the king out of his realm. So the Arabian king arrived in Yemen to sojourn with the Yemeni king, and there he stayed. After a time the Yemeni host tried to invade Arabia, but failed.

For many years the Arabian king and Omar lived in the Yemeni capital. During this time a son was born to the Arabian king, and on the same day one was born also to his baron Omar, who gave him the name of Amar. When this boy was five years old his father entrusted him to the care of one Abutar<sup>5</sup>—a lion-dchabuki and a renowned retainer of his—saying, 'I am going to entrust this son of mine Amar to you: train him for battle and martial exercises, so that he may come to excel all the dchabukis of Arabia.' Abutar

<sup>1</sup> The negative in the text is to be disregarded.

<sup>2</sup> Marr (p. 32, n. 4) states that *khani* in *Amiran-Darejaniani* signifies 'Turk'. The ruler is styled 'the Khan king' (*mep'e khani'a*), while his subjects are 'Turks' (*t'urk'ni*), and his realm 'Turkestan' (*t'urk'estani* or *t'urk'et'i*).

<sup>3</sup> The kingdoms in this story have no place in history or geography. Neither Yemen nor Arabia ever constituted a specific polity. 'The land of the Turks'—although such a phrase would at the beginning of the twelfth century probably still suggest central Asia rather than Asia Minor to the popular consciousness in Caucasia and elsewhere—must for the purposes of this story be conceived of as adjoining 'Arabia'.

<sup>4</sup> In order to distinguish between the two 'Arabian kings', the one at this juncture triumphant will be glossed until after the death of his rival as '[the victorious] . . .'. The other will appear simply as 'the Arabian king'.

<sup>5</sup> (Abu Tāhir).

replied, 'I will instruct him well in all the accomplishments that befit a man: and may God endow him with courage, for where courage is lacking nothing can avail.' Now Abutar had had triumphs [in battle] from his youth up, and had always borne himself like a good dchabuki: no enemy<sup>1</sup> had ever been able to stand against him. That was why they gave Amar to Abutar to train.

When Amar was seven years old Abutar taught him to handle a spear, and all the arts befitting a dchabuki. When he was in his armour he did not quit himself at all like a mere boy! He hunted and engaged in martial exercises: whenever the little boy saw a lion or a panther upon the plain, he would kill it like a cat.<sup>2</sup>

One day when he was exercising with his spear out upon the plain, a stranger came up, watched the boy, then raised his astrolabe<sup>3</sup> and looked into it in order to ascertain his destiny. When he had done this, the sage pronounced, 'No dchabuki upon the earth will be able to stand against this boy.'

Time went by—and when he had reached the age of fifteen there was no horse worthy of Amar to be found in the land of Yemen. His father Omar sought one for him, but could not find a fitting. Then some Indians arrived, bringing with them a chestnut<sup>4</sup> ambler<sup>5</sup>—there was no horse like it upon the earth. The Yemeni king was much pleased with it, bought it for three thousand drachmas, then presented it to Ambri Arabi—him who had been called 'Amar' since childhood—and told him to mount. Ambri Arabi mounted, called for a spear, went off to the maidan, and began to go through exercises there. The Yemeni king, the Arabian king, and the whole of Yemen watched and said, 'There is neither man nor horse like these upon the earth!'

Presently a horseman came galloping up. Ambri Arabi asked him, 'Why do you come in such haste, brother?'—and the horse-

<sup>1</sup> Reading *mteri* for *mgeri*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the youthful Iskandar's killing of lions, *Iskandarnāma* (C), p. 144. Also the characterization in *Gerchāsp*, p. 41: '... un héros chevaleresque, combattant les lions, ... habile à manier le bouclier et à frapper du sabre.'

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Iskandarnāma* (C), pp. 141-2, also note 48.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Shāhnāma* (W), i, p. 322; iii, p. 32; v, p. 61; vi, p. 381; viii, p. 270. Also the chestnut of Bahrām Gur, 'like the wind in speed, in paces faultless, in its gallop, smooth'. *Haft Paikar* (W), p. 48.

<sup>5</sup> Though seemingly inappropriate to the context, *t'okhariki* is an unambiguous word. Etymologically it signifies 'Tokharian' horse, and derives from Persian *tukhārik*. See H. W. Bailey, 'Irano-Indica, III', *B.S.O.A.S.* 1950, 13:2, pp. 403-4. Also O. Wardrop, 'English-Svanetian Vocabulary' (*t'hukvrig*), *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1911, p. 610.



man told him, 'Brigands have fallen upon our caravan<sup>1</sup> and all the others have been captured. I alone escaped!' Then Ambri said to him, 'Go in front and show me the way!' And the horseman did so.

Ambri Arabi set out with Abutar, his retainer and tutor, and presently they saw a great host of three thousand horsemen coming towards them over the plain. Then Abutar said, 'Stay here—for you are still a young lad—and see how your retainer and tutor fights.' Ambri Arabi's heart was stirred to anger against his tutor, and he replied, 'Do not talk to me in this fashion before ever you have seen me proved in battle!'

#### Ambri Arabi's first battle—that with the brigands

Then they both charged—and by Your Majesty's head, it was a fierce battle indeed that they had! Lord and retainer killed each of them fifteen hundred men: the rest all fled. But, although Abutar was a very lion and had proved himself in battle on many a day—by Your Majesty's head, he was no more the peer of Ambri Arabi than some wretched boy might have been! Such was Ambri Arabi's first battle.<sup>2</sup>

(Amiran Darejanisdze said, 'This man has given his story a good start, and I am going to have him tell some more.' The man said, 'I shall tell you only of what I have witnessed with my own eyes, for [the exploits] one hears of are beyond number.' And he went on, 'Amiran Darejanisdze, may you live for ever! So help me God, I am now going to tell you of deeds of Ambri's beside which what I have already spoken of is nothing.' And so he continued with his story.)

Those brigands turned out to be men of the Khan king's, and when he had heard of the slaughter of those Turks, the king's wrath rose against the Yemenis, the more so as he was already their enemy.—He assembled two hundred thousand warriors, invaded and devastated the whole land of Yemen, and then besieged the Yemeni king, sitting down before the gates of his city. There was no reckoning the number of his host, and the Yemeni king and his realm were cast down into great gloom and wretchedness.

<sup>1</sup> The theme of the dchabuki who comes to the aid of a caravan either menaced or already plundered by brigands recurs frequently in our text (pp. 95–98, 126–7, 164–7). The story of Avt'andil's fight with the pirates (R 1008–23) seems clearly to be modelled on these episodes.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the assertion of Tovorg's father that the boy is too young for battle, and Tovorg's subsequent exploits. *Gerchâsp*, pp. 93–101.

Ambri Arabi's second battle—fought when the Khan king's host was besieging the Yemenis' capital

One day when the Yemeni king and the Arabian king were sitting on a high rampart, looking out over the besieging host, Ambri Arabi saddled his chestnut, put on his armour, and went out, followed by his retainer Abutar. They charged and began to fight fiercely—by God in Heaven and Your Majesty's head, never has such fighting been seen by the eye of man! Soon they were lost among the host, and presently we said, 'There are fifteen hundred men there: Ambri Arabi [has slaughtered] a thousand of them, and his retainer Abutar five hundred.'

They returned unharmed, and then the Yemeni king went down to meet Ambri, sang his praises, and said, 'Blessed is your right arm, and great indeed must be the power of God, since He has created such a dchabuki as you!' Not the king alone, but all the people in the city bestowed countless gifts upon Ambri. After that there was fighting each day, and Ambri and Abutar slaughtered ever more.

Presently the besieging host began to lose heart: they held on for a further ten days, during which time they sacrificed fifteen thousand men [in battle], but after that they had no stomach to remain longer. And so they broke up the siege and withdrew.

In the morning, when he saw that they had gone, Ambri Arabi set out on his chestnut with his tutor Abutar, and presently overtook them. Ambri Arabi killed fifteen hundred men: the rest just managed to escape. At this point Ambri turned about and went back into the city, but his retainer Abutar pressed on with the pursuit of the host, and slew about three hundred men. In the end, however, the host managed to kill his horse, and then they carried him off a prisoner.

Ambri Arabi searched everywhere for his retainer Abutar, but could not find him. Grieved at this, he inquired about his tutor, but could learn nothing. At length, however, a man came forward and said, 'What is the use of seeking to hide it?—The host killed his horse and carried Abutar himself off a prisoner.'

Then Ambri Arabi said, 'When you were without your pupil you must have fallen into straits that were sore indeed! Or else your capture is truly strange!' And then in a loud voice he announced, 'With a solemn oath I swear that I will either meet my death or rescue my tutor, the lion Abutar!'

He set out alone, and in Turkestan he overtook the host and attacked it fiercely. Had you seen him then you would have said, 'Never have we seen such a man!' They came at him and engaged with great weight of numbers. The fighting continued until dusk—when, finding that he was still attacking fiercely, those who were still alive stood their ground no longer, but fled. Ambri rescued Abutar and said to him, 'My lion, come to my aid in the same way if ever I find myself in such straits!' Then Abutar sang his praises and said, 'Never has such a dchabuki as you been seen upon the face of all the earth!'

We went off, and soon Ambri Arabi overtook us, [whereupon we told him that] in the battle they had killed twelve hundred of our men.<sup>1</sup>

The Yemeni king came out a day's journey with all his barons and the burgesses of his capital, to welcome Ambri, sang his praises,<sup>2</sup> and bestowed a multitude of gifts upon him. All held him as dear as a son.

Now after some time had passed, Ambri Arabi said to the Yemeni king, 'Oh King, may you live for ever! God has granted Your Majesty victory—but yet the Turks have laid waste<sup>3</sup> your realm! Now let me have a host and I will go to Turkestan and avenge all the blood they have shed.' The king was delighted, and had a host mustered.

Ambri Arabi's invasion of Turkestan to avenge the blood  
shed by the Turks

The army-leaders went off and assembled sixty thousand men. The Yemeni king mounted, went out, viewed his army, and then put it in the hands of Ambri Arabi. It began to appear, however, that the Yemeni host stood in terror of the Turks: they said, 'King of Kings, may you live for ever! We have never heard from our fathers, nor do we ourselves recall, that the Yemenis have ever invaded Turkestan—and now the whole of Arabia is allied to it!' But the king replied, 'I swear by God that victory will be granted to us, for no host which is commanded by this man who has appeared here in our realm can be overcome by any enemy.' Then Ambri Arabi said, 'Oh King, may you live for ever! The Turks were no enemies of mine that I should seek vengeance on them for myself. But I would remind you of what your realm has suffered at their hands, and how they have ravaged your lands. I know that

<sup>1</sup> This passage would appear to have suffered displacement.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Chronicle*, p. 308, lines 1-2.      <sup>3</sup> Reading *mookhrebuli* for *moakhlebul*.

the realm of the Turks is powerful, with countless warriors, insolent in their pride; but there are many stratagems we can use against them. God will lend me his aid: indeed, I will wreak vengeance upon them even if I must go alone.'

The king gave him great thanks, put the host under his command, and appointed army-leaders [to serve under him], and after that they set out. Ambri Arabi gave the order, 'Follow us at a distance'<sup>1</sup>—and then went on ahead with a thousand warriors, while the bulk of the host came on behind. And then we moved into the land of the Turks, and laid it waste as far as we got into it.

The Khan king learned of the Yemenis' invasion of his lands, and he assembled all his barons and told them, 'This Yemeni invasion of Turkestan is a source of grief and shame to Our Majesty, and we must make them repent of it.—Now we too will muster a host, and then we will go to meet them before they can advance any farther into our land.'<sup>2</sup>

His barons replied, 'Oh King, may you live for ever! Never yet has Yemen been able to rival Turkestan! All this must surely be the doing of that man who has been placed in command of the Yemeni host—never would the Yemenis have dared to invade Turkestan otherwise! Now let us gather together a host, go to meet them, and do whatever God would have us do.'

The Turks mustered, and the king selected eighty thousand warriors. They went out to meet the host of the Yemeni king,<sup>3</sup> engaged, and utterly defeated it, so that but few escaped. We—Ambri Arabi himself and fifteen hundred men—heard the news in Turkestan, and grieved over it. Then Ambri Arabi said, 'Men of Yemen, this is a heavy blow—but God and our own prowess will still save us!' With one voice we all declared, 'Whatever you command, that will we do.' After that we set out.

We came to a small city belonging to the Turks, attacked, stormed, and occupied it. Presently the 'Turks' host came and besieged us—and their numbers were beyond counting!

#### Ambri Arabi's battle with the 'Turks' host

As soon as ever that countless host arrived, leaving us inside,

<sup>1</sup> Literally, 'march upon our trail'.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, 'before they enter our land' [? Turkestan proper].

<sup>3</sup> Sc. the main body of the host under Ambri's command: we must suppose it to have been quite out of touch with the advance guard at the time of the Turks' attack.

Ambri Arabi went out alone and engaged it; that day, so it was said, he killed two thousand men! He came in unharmed—but now he was becoming anxious about Abutar. For his part Abutar did not know where his lord and the rest of us might be.<sup>1</sup> Now he was told that Ambri Arabi was in that small city, and forthwith he set out and came to join him. And when day had broken he charged in among the [besieging] host.

As the din of battle rose, Ambri Arabi said, 'What can be the meaning of this great din?' The fighting continued, but at first we could not make out what was happening. When we went to the outskirts of the city, however, we saw that Abutar had come. He entered [the city]—but he brought in with him only three hundred of his five hundred men. Now when Ambri Arabi realized what had happened, he called for his horse and went out to avenge the deaths of Abutar's men, and there was a fearful battle. That day he unhorsed and killed no small number with the spear, which it was his habit to use in long-drawn-out fighting. He came in again unharmed, and Abutar rejoiced at his return.

The besieging host,<sup>2</sup> stricken with panic, now sent this message to the Khan king: 'This dchabuki who has occupied this city of ours brings disaster upon his enemies! Our host is weakened, and he has the upper hand. Now we beg you to come yourself—do not think that this is any paltry matter!' Some barons went off with this message to the Khan king.

The king ordered the muster of a host.—Now he had three champions whom no man could stand against, and to these he said: 'Ambri Arabi—a man whom no one can stand against, a dchabuki renowned over the whole earth, unrivalled and illustrious in his triumphs—has destroyed our host, inflicting on it twice the slaughter it has on the Yemeni.<sup>3</sup> Now, indeed, he is established within our borders. The first [of these facts] brings shame upon our realm, and the second is a cause of distress to all. Many of our host has he killed with his own hands.—With no meagre host can Our Majesty go to meet him! He has now gained knowledge of our land and tried the courage of our host. If we contrived to inflict a reverse upon him when we slaughtered his

<sup>1</sup> Abutar had apparently not as yet taken any part in the campaign. There is a certain lack of articulation in this section of the narrative.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, 'the host outside'.

<sup>3</sup> Sc. the main body of Ambri's original host.

host, it was only because the dchabuki himself was not then with it. Now, if he were to go back [to Yemen] to raise another, and then return, no one in our lands would escape alive, for he feels great enmity towards our realm.'

The champions replied: 'Oh King, may you live for ever! If we may speak our mind—it grieves us to behold Your Majesty plunged into such distress of mind by the coming of a single stranger! Now give one of us three the command to go forth: if you so command, we will bring him captive before you: if you so command, we will bring you his head. But do not surrender to such fear and distress on his account!' The king gave them thanks and said, 'I myself will set out with my entire host, and you three must come also. Great is the grief and distress that the presence of this man in our lands causes me.'

Then he told his army-leaders to get ready to move, and warriors from the whole land assembled in a countless multitude.—They themselves reckoned that they numbered eight hundred thousand. And so, taking with him his three champions, the king set out to give battle to Ambri Arabi.

The coming of the Khan king with his three champions  
and a countless host—behold the prowess of Ambri Arabi  
and the fierce battles that took place!

One day the host that was besieging us took horse and made ready to receive the Khan king, and clarion and tabor were sounded in honour of his coming. Warriors beyond counting appeared before our eyes, and there was no longer any reckoning to be made of them. All were accoutred for battle with arms of a splendour such as has never been seen by man. Never had we seen such a multitude of warriors! As we ourselves had only thirteen hundred men, we fell into deep gloom and despondency. Ambri Arabi said, however, 'We can save ourselves—first with God's help, secondly through our own prowess!' Then he said to Abutar, 'We must attack these newcomers!' And Abutar replied, 'Yes, by Heaven, we must strike them a heavy blow!' Ambri gave the command to arm, and we put on our armour. Then he took a spear, mounted his chestnut, and said, 'Now, men of Yemen, witness my prowess!'

He charged, and in the very first onset lifted a man from his saddle with his spear, dashed him down, and [with this feat] so struck terror into the host that the advance guard fled even before

the main body had come up. When the main body did arrive he went forward to meet it, and then there was such fearful fighting as I have never seen, with [the carcasses of] horses and of men piling up. When dusk fell we withdrew inside [the city]: we had lost only a few men, but the dead in the besieging host were countless.

The Khan king advanced and took up his quarters in a large pavilion,<sup>1</sup> bringing up with him his own guard,<sup>2</sup> which the eye could not encompass. His three champions appeared in front of it, and took up their quarters in a tent. But the host, which had already been terrified by [the report of] Ambri Arabi's valour, was now deep in dread.

The Khan king sent a man to Ambri Arabi with this message: 'You are a good man and of flawless prowess—and yet, although you are not of the Yemeni land, but an Arab, you have invaded my realm, slaughtered my host, and devastated my lands—and now you are occupying one of my cities! For all that, although you deserve it, I will not inflict any punishment<sup>3</sup> on you, since you were tricked into this by the Yemenis. Now, come over to me, and I shall wed you to the daughter of one of my barons and forget all the wrongs you have done me. But if you do not obey this summons of ours, I will have your head cut off and your flesh eaten by dogs.'

When the envoys had come and delivered this message to Ambri Arabi he gave them this reply: 'As he is a great king, I will not send the answer that he deserves! I will say no more than this: if instead of coming out against me himself he had stayed where he was to dispatch this command, I should have quitted his realm without giving him further offence: but now that he has appeared himself, to make my peace with him would be the act of a [timid] youth. As for his first proposal—to that I give no reply.'

The envoys went and told all to the king: when he had received this answer from them he was angered and sent a second message: 'Since you are such a great dchabuki, here is an exploit for you! I have three champions: do battle with them and make proof of their prowess!' The champions themselves also sent a message: 'Having had good luck in some paltry contests with weaklings and old men you have become puffed-up! But such deeds do not merit

<sup>1</sup> *Palati* (Latin *palatium*) means properly a large and splendid residence or room.

<sup>2</sup> *Spa* is a common word for 'army'. In the present story, however, it appears to refer to the king's household troops, as distinct from levies (*lashk'ar*).

<sup>3</sup> Reading *patiži* for *pativi*.

the name of prowess!—Now if you come over to us we shall put in a good word for you with the king, and let you get away unharmed, consigning all your misdeeds to oblivion, many as they are. If you do not, there must be battle between you and us: choose which you like.' Ambri Arabi sent this reply: 'I do not presume to send any answer to the king—but do you not understand that he has become weary of you and desires to have you killed? And such will indeed be your end, believe me.—Now if the three of you all come out together I shall be the better pleased.'

The envoys went back, and then the champions sent an envoy with this [further] message: 'Come out alone, and we too shall come out one by one.' And so they determined upon battle for the following day.<sup>1</sup>

When day had broken the king had a gold-brocaded tent opened wide, seated himself inside it, placed five hundred of his barons round about him, and held a feast. Minstrels sang and tumblers performed, and the whole host took their places to watch.

Ambri Arabi mounted his chestnut and went out, followed by his tutor Abutar. One of the three champions came out and sent a flail over to him with this message: 'Today let us fight with these.' Ambri Arabi took the flail and returned this reply: 'I see that your lord does not let the approach of your death worry him—for, well knowing that you are about to meet it at my hands, he sits feasting!'

Then they circled round each other at the gallop, charged, engaged, and rained down blows on each other. Then presently Ambri Arabi shouted in a loud voice, 'Now behold the fate of the king's champion!'—struck the champion with his flail, broke his back, and killed him. Great was the consternation of those outside! [Inside the city] all the warriors said, 'Never has such a dchabuki as Ambri Arabi been seen!' Ambri Arabi sent this message: 'If you [two] champions choose to come out straightaway, I am ready.' However, the king, who was much grieved, sent this reply, 'Withdraw for today, and come out again tomorrow.' Ambri Arabi turned about and went back into the city, and we sang his praises: and all of us took fresh heart.

When day had broken the Khan king seated himself, placed his barons round about him, and held a feast. But the minstrels did

<sup>1</sup> In the text this formula occurs before the sentence which precedes it in the translation.



not sing now! The whole host came forward to watch. Ambri Arabi went out, taking with him his tutor Abutar—not that he stood in any need of help, but Abutar had trained him in fighting since his childhood, and used still to instruct him in any branch of warlike accomplishment in which he might fall short: that was why Ambri always went out accompanied by him.

The second champion came out and said, 'Let us fight today with the scimitar.' To which Ambri Arabi replied, 'Yes, by Heaven—it will let me kill you more quickly!' They charged each other, shouted—and then, by your head, it was battle enough! Each shivered his scimitar upon the other and then drew out a second. Tumult rose from among the hosts. Then at length Ambri Arabi wheeled about and shouted, 'See how my scimitar cuts!' The champion, seemingly stricken with fear, sought to save himself in flight. Ambri Arabi overtook him, however, struck him across the waist with his scimitar and took off the whole upper part [of his body]—his legs must have been lashed to his horse. This made off, and Ambri Arabi shouted out, 'Do not be angry—we only wanted half of him!' And the Khan king grieved for the death of his champion. Ambri Arabi came in, and we all sang his praises, felt new strength, and said, 'Since Ambri Arabi is our lord, none save God Himself can do us harm!'

Time passed, and then Ambri Arabi, becoming impatient for his third contest, sent envoys to the Khan king with this message: 'Since it was for war you came here, war we must have! Send out that third champion. I know that he is the best of them all—but let him be! We cannot go our ways without having had a battle, so let there be one tomorrow between him and me.' The unhappy king sent no answer but, 'Do not be impatient, my champion will not let you escape without battle: be ready tomorrow.'

In the morning the Khan king seated himself, and his whole host put on their armour and formed themselves up into countless ranks. The third champion came out: he had covered the weak points of his horse with iron plating, while he himself was covered over with iron. We all said that a finer dchabuki there could not be. The champion sent a man [to Ambri] with this message: 'Today must bring death to either you or me! If you overcome me, do not spare my life: while if I vanquish you, I will kill you in vengeance for all the blood you have shed in Turkestan.'

Ambri Arabi shouted, 'The day of your death has come!'—and

Abutar, 'You are not one to stand against our lord—fight rather with me!' When he heard this [challenge from Abutar] the champion made a gesture of contempt, and shouted some abuse at him.

This quarrelling made Ambri Arabi annoyed with Abutar, and he went forward alone with a spear. They circled round each other at the gallop and fought for a short time. Then Ambri Arabi wheeled about, shouted to the king, 'Now see what this champion of yours is worth!'—charged, thrust with his spear, lifted the champion from his saddle, cast him down in front of the king, and slew him. Then he called out to the king, 'Now ask this champion of yours what manner of dchabuki I am!'

When the king saw what had happened he gave this command: 'At him now, every man among you who has the strength for it—for he has slaughtered my host and killed my three champions!' And his whole army attacked us there and then. Abutar advanced at the head of Ambri Arabi's [force]—and it was said that that day he did better than any. Heavy was the fighting, and countless numbers of the [Khan king's] host were killed. Ambri Arabi came in unharmed. We had lost only a hundred men from our host, while the [Khan king's] host had both been stricken with terror and lost many men.—That day passed, and the next, then on the third Ambri Arabi [said to Abutar], 'We are going to attack at dawn tomorrow: although their host is large it is now terror-stricken, and so we can vanquish it.' And he told Abutar that they would go out at dawn.

We fell upon the host, and from dawn till dusk there was fierce fighting. In the end, however, after we had slaughtered countless of their host, they could face the fury of our attacks no longer. Ambri Arabi broke away and took the Khan king prisoner, but as soon as he knew who he was he dismounted and made obeisance, [saying,] 'Pardon me, oh King! I am but a liegeman, while you are a great king! It would be unfitting for you to be either killed or led away captive by me.' And so he let him go; nor did he pursue the host any farther.—We turned about and carried off the booty, which was beyond reckoning. Then for a week we took our ease, and after that we set out in triumph for Yemen.

The Yemeni king heard the news, rejoiced greatly over our victory, and came out three days' journey to meet us. He and all his barons sang [Ambri's] praises. First the king himself and afterwards the whole people bestowed measureless gifts upon him. And

so we entered the Yemeni capital. The king and all the people cherished Ambri as his valour deserved. The Yemeni land waxed prosperous: the people were grateful to Ambri Arabi for delivering them through his prowess from servitude. The king and the whole of Yemen knew content and great happiness.

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*The coming of Indo Dchabuki<sup>1</sup> into the Yemeni land*

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Now it came to pass that one Indo Dchabuki, whom no one on earth could stand against, conquered many provinces belonging to the Yemeni king to a depth of seven days' journey; and no traveller, caravaneer, or other man dared enter these. Deep was the misery and sorrow he brought upon the Yemeni land, but they could not defeat him in battle. Many a time did their host go out against him, but he always slaughtered and routed it. Now the Yemeni king gave the command that neither high nor low were to say anything about Indo Dchabuki to Ambri Arabi, lest he should go out to give him battle and meet death at his hands. For he loved Ambri Arabi and dreaded lest he should be killed.

One day while Ambri Arabi was exercising with a spear, watched by all the people, a man came up weeping. Ambri Arabi asked him, 'What ails you, brother? Why have you ridden your horse so hard, and why are you weeping?' And the man replied, 'We have a caravan—we are caravaneers from Basra—and were on our way to the capital of Yemen when that drinker of blood and despoiler of every land Indo Dchabuki came upon us. He has ravaged the Yemeni kingdom and seized towns and villages in it. Every province [he has conquered] is suffering evil at his hands. He holds a plain shut in by mountains under his sway—and he has a grip on the mountains as well.'

Ambri Arabi was annoyed and said to Abutar, 'So! They have been keeping this man's doings from us.' Straight away he left his spear-practice, went off, and, much displeased, came before the Yemeni king and sat down in front of him. The king said, 'Well, speak your mind, Ambri Arabi!' And he replied, 'Oh King, may you live for ever! I am displeased with Your Majesty!' When the king asked why, he went on, 'Some man or other has come and

<sup>1</sup> There is nothing to connect this dchabuki with his namesake in the first story.

has been devastating your realm, taking your cities and bringing great sufferings upon your land—and yet you have told me nothing about him!

The Yemeni king was much distressed, and asked [those about him] who had told Ambri of this; but they replied, 'No one is to blame: he was told by one who did not know what he was doing.' Then Ambri Arabi said, 'Oh King, I am going off to do battle with that man—and with God's help he will not escape me unharmed.'

When the Yemeni king heard this he was distressed and said, 'Ambri Arabi, no more of this talk! I will not let you go out to do battle with him: put away all thought of that!' But Ambri Arabi replied, 'I have made up my mind to set out tomorrow!' He was indeed determined to do so, and the king was powerless to prevent him.—He made ready and set out: as he passed through the gate of the city the people wondered which would win, and some thought that it would be the other.

After he had passed out Ambri Arabi asked, 'With what is Indo Dchabuki in the habit of fighting?' And they told him that it was the spear. Then he said, 'It would be doing scant justice to either myself or him if I did not take a good supply of horses with me'—and sent back a man to pick out two hundred steeds. These he took with him. On we went, and when we entered the lands held by Indo Dchabuki they told Ambri Arabi, 'He spends much time in hunting, and wherever he may be, he always has thirty steeds with him.' Then Ambri Arabi picked out thirty steeds and set out over the plain in search. Abutar went off a different way—and in the course of his hunting Indo Dchabuki came upon him and shouted, 'Who are you?' And he replied, 'I am Abutar, Ambri Arabi's retainer.'

On hearing this Indo Dchabuki charged furiously, and at the first onset with a thrust of his spear lifted Abutar from his saddle, dashed him to the ground, and knocked the senses out of him. But he did not kill him. Instead he tethered Abutar's horse with a belt, left him there, and went on with his hunting.

### *The meeting of Ambri Arabi and Indo Dchabuki*

Not knowing what had happened to Abutar, we went on searching for Indo Dchabuki. Presently he came up close, but there was a mist, and neither could we see him nor he us. Then the mist lifted and

he perceived us—whereupon he shouted, 'Who are you?' Ambri replied, 'I am Ambri Arabi, and I am seeking Indo Dchabuki.' Then Indo said, 'Well, if it is he you are looking for, you have found him! I am he, and an evil destiny it was that brought you to me!'

With that they charged and crashed together—and by your head, such fighting, such a splendid battle, I have never seen! Each killed twenty of the other's horses.

At length Indo Dchabuki began to wonder who this man who fought so well might be, and he said, 'Now, although you have come here to do battle with me, let us, if you will, take our ease together. Never fear—I will give you plenty of encounters: all this has been a mere game.' Then Ambri Arabi replied, 'Indo Dchabuki, by God in Heaven, in you I have found a good dchabuki! Let us do as you say, in God's name!'

They put an end to their fighting and went off: as they went along Indo said, 'While I was hunting a man came up and fought with me: I dashed him down and left him senseless. Perhaps he is one of your men—you should go and see him.' And we said, 'It must have been Abutar!'

We went to the place [of the fight], found Abutar sitting up, though still weak, and asked him what ailed him, as though we knew nothing. And he told us, 'Indo Dchabuki came upon me, lifted me up on his spear, dashed me to the ground, and knocked the senses out of me!'

We took him off with us and went to Indo Dchabuki's lodging. So splendid were Indo's tents and their furnishings that none could possibly be finer! A repast had been prepared, and Ambri and Indo sat down to it. Ambri Arabi, however, was still anxious about Abutar. Presently we [others] went in: Ambri Arabi rejoiced greatly, and Indo Dchabuki too. Indo said to Abutar, 'Pray pardon me that I did not recognize you—but you did speak to me rather roughly!<sup>1</sup> Thanks be to God that I did not kill you!' Presently the banquet came to an end, and we separated for the day.

The following day Ambri Arabi summoned Indo Dchabuki to be his guest, and they took their ease together. In the course of talk, however, Indo Dchabuki asked, 'Now, did you or did you not come here to do battle with me?' And Ambri Arabi replied, 'I came here with no other thought!' The other laughed, and said,

<sup>1</sup> There is no suggestion of this in the account of the incident.

'You were ill advised indeed!' Then they determined upon battle for the following day, and separated.

The story of Ambri Arabi and Indo Dchabuki

In the morning each of them put on his armour and brought out forty horses. They engaged—such dchabukis or such a fierce and splendid battle no one has ever seen! That day Ambri Arabi killed all forty of Indo's horses, while Indo Dchabuki killed [only] thirty of Ambri's. At length they separated. Indo Dchabuki was grieved at being worsted by Ambri Arabi, and sent a man to him with this message: 'Tomorrow we shall do battle once more!' And Ambri sent the answer: 'Yes, by Heaven, so it must be!'

When they went out for the third day<sup>1</sup> each took sixty horses with him. They engaged—and by your head, far different was that day's from the fighting that had gone before! That was as child's play to this! In his fury Indo Dchabuki killed all sixty of Ambri Arabi's horses, while Ambri killed [only] fifty of Indo's. Ambri Arabi was grieved at being worsted by Indo Dchabuki, and sent a fourth man<sup>2</sup> with this message: 'Tomorrow we must have battle once more!' And Indo sent the reply, 'Yes, by Heaven, so it must be!'

They went out for a fourth battle and engaged. And so sometimes the one would kill [his adversary's] horse and have him down, sometimes the other—we could not tell which was the better. Every day they continued with this great contest, but between whiles they made very merry, and went hunting. This went on for many days: but we were in dread lest one of them should be killed.

The fifth battle of Ambri Arabi and Indo Dchabuki, and  
the vanquishing of Indo

One day Ambri Arabi sent a man to Indo Dchabuki with this message: 'Here we are, spending our time in hunting and diversions—and this after your hands have turned our lord's realm into a desert! As I was sent to bring you before the Yemeni king,<sup>3</sup> we must have a decision: then, if you have vanquished me, you can do what you choose to the Yemeni king!—If you will, mount your

<sup>1</sup> Reckoning from their first encounter.

<sup>2</sup> The sense is, of course, that it was the fourth time a messenger had carried a challenge. In fact, however, this is only the 'second' man: the first battle had been begun without any such preliminaries, and the second arranged verbally.

<sup>3</sup> Above (p. 54) Ambri is described as setting out in search of Indo in defiance of the king's wishes.

black steed tomorrow, and cover the weak places with an iron breastplate: I shall do likewise.' Indo sent this answer; 'Do you not understand that the Yemeni king has become weary of you, and that he has sent you to do battle with me because he desires your death?—And now tomorrow must decide between you and me.'

When day had broken Indo Dchabuki put on an iron breastplate and mounted his black steed. He came out—and we said, 'There is no dchabuki like him! Today must bring death to one of them.' It grieved us that they were going to have battle that day, but what could we do?

Ambri Arabi, accoutred in the same fashion, took up his position opposite. They circled round each other at the gallop, charged, shouted, and engaged. By your head and God's life, they gave proof of their skill upon each other from morning until dusk! Yet for all their spear-thrusting, neither could shake the other; nor could we see any sign that one was wearing the other out. It was a hard battle: fiercely did they fight! The ear of man could hear nothing save shouts and thunder-strokes upon armour that might have shaken the earth. And so the day wore on, without our perceiving any flagging in either, or tiring in their horses.

At last Indo Dchabuki wheeled about, cried out in a loud voice, 'Ambri Arabi, behold now my prowess and the strength of my arm!'—then charged, shattered Ambri's iron breastplate with his spear, and pierced deeply through his armour and all his body-covering. The sound of the blow was like a clap of thunder, and had everyone astounded. Then Ambri Arabi put his horse into a gallop, and, shouting, 'Ambri Arabi has come, and the hour of your death too!'—charged, and, grinding his teeth, lifted up Indo Dchabuki with his horse and dashed both to the ground, killing the horse and laying Indo Dchabuki low.

Then, looking up, Indo Dchabuki said, 'Thanks be to God that I have seen this best of dchabukis with my own eyes: for who could believe in such worship on hearsay only!' Ambri Arabi dismounted, and they embraced and kissed.

After that the two of them went to Ambri Arabi's tent, and great was the rejoicing that each of the heroes had escaped unharmed from the hands of the other. Ambri Arabi said to Indo Dchabuki, 'From this day forward I am your brother and your servant!' Now,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. P'ridon's declaration to Tariel, R 593: also the oaths exchanged after



if you will, let us go before the Yemeni king: but if you do not wish to go—well, it is for you to decide.’ Indo Dchabuki replied, ‘Since God has given victory to you—and that I do not deny—give the order and let us go.’

Ambri Arabi gave the order, and we set out for Yemen. The news reached the Yemeni king: he rejoiced greatly, and he and all his barons came out a day’s journey to meet us. They sang the praises of Ambri Arabi and Indo Dchabuki alike. We entered the Yemeni capital, and the burgesses and all the women and all the men came out to meet us, all dancing for joy. And throughout the Yemeni land there was great rejoicing and celebration.

Indo Dchabuki remained for a week with the Yemeni king, and Ambri Arabi and he exchanged oaths of brotherhood. Then he made obeisance to the Yemeni king and said, ‘Oh King, may you live for ever! It was not of my own free will that I came here: I do not deny that this man vanquished me and brought me here.—You should be grateful to him.’ And the Yemeni king replied, ‘Your defeat was ordained by God: human might could not have overcome you otherwise!’

Indo Dchabuki said to the Yemeni king, ‘Grant me leave to go: but should you ever call on me for service I shall come to you.’ The king bestowed great gifts upon him, and then he went off. Ambri Arabi went some way with him along the road. Much did they grieve that they would be far sundered! They swore, ‘Should trouble come from any side, we shall be as one.’ And with these words they separated, Indo Dchabuki betaking himself off while we returned to the Yemeni capital. The whole realm of Yemen was full of joy, and they declared that Ambri Arabi was the finest of all [dchabukis].

One day the Arabian king and the Yemeni king came and sat down with all the barons, and Ambri Arabi took his place opposite the kings. Then the Arabian king said, ‘Ambri Arabi, my son, I am now an old man.—This son of mine and you were born on the same day. Now I am near to death! You know how the [victorious] Arabian king overcame us and drove us from our royal state. Now I am going to place my son in your hands: make of him what you will.’

battle between Amiran and Sep’edavle (p. 163) and between Mze Dchabuki and Amarindo (p. 189): also the oath exchanged in similar circumstances between Vakhtang Gurgaslani and the King of Sind, *Chronicle*, p. 143.

The king took his son by the hand and led him over to Ambri Arabi. Then Ambri Arabi rose and said, 'Oh King, may you live for ever! Overmuch talk would be wearisome—but I give you my word that till my dying day I will not spare myself in your service.'

Some time after this the Arabian king died. The Yemeni king grieved sorely, the more for his dying outside his own realm. A few days after, Ambri Arabi said to the Yemeni king, 'Oh King, may you live for ever! My lord the Arabian king has passed from this world, dying outside his own realm. Now it is true that this son he has left behind him wants for nothing here with you, yet my spirit cannot rest: for it does not befit the son of my lord the Arabian king to remain with you any longer. However, I shall set out alone with a small host. The Arabs are lion-dchabukis, and to go out against them is a hard undertaking indeed—but God will aid me, and I cannot leave my lord unavenged.' The Yemeni king was pleased with these words of Ambri Arabi's, and replied, 'You speak as your prowess had made us hope you would! And God knows I will not grudge my host for the reconquest of the [Arabian] patrimony.'

When the son of the Arabian king<sup>1</sup> heard that Ambri Arabi was not going to take him with him—for the Yemeni king did not wish the king's son to go, but rather that Ambri Arabi should go off alone with the Yemeni host<sup>2</sup>—he was much displeased, and would not acquiesce. At length the two of them agreed to set out together, and made ready. He was a good-looking boy,<sup>3</sup> this son of the Arabian king, and a very good dchabuki.<sup>4</sup> And so, after picking out three thousand warriors from the Yemeni king's host, they set out to conquer Arabia.

Here is Ambri Arabi's setting out with the son of the  
Arabian king, and their great battle

The other Arabian king<sup>5</sup> learned who was coming, and assembled a countless host and went to meet him. This host went as far as

<sup>1</sup> This appellation continues to designate the son of the king who has died in exile.

<sup>2</sup> The text of Ambri's speech and this following passage is probably corrupt. As it stands, the speech can only be interpreted as a reproach to the king for his attitude towards the Arabian king's son.

<sup>3</sup> The literal meaning of *naqop'i* is 'fruit'. Like the latter term, it is quite commonly used to denote infant offspring; but the connotation of a young man is regular in our text.

<sup>4</sup> Literally, '[was] very good'.

<sup>5</sup> Sc. he hitherto glossed as 'the [victorious] . . .'. His rival dead, he now becomes 'the Arabian king'. See p. 40, n. 4.

a certain great plain, and there it pitched many tents. Some time after, we arrived there too: very large did that host look to us, but none the less we determined to make a fierce attack. In our council someone said, 'Let us fall upon them at dawn, and let whatever God wills befall us.' And one said this and another that. At length Abutar, Ambri's tutor, rose and said, 'You choose a place and post yourselves in it: I shall go out, entice them, and draw them forward to some spot that favours you—and then may whatever God wills befall us in the battle.'

These words of Abutar's pleased Ambri Arabi, and we made choice forthwith of a place for battle the following day. As Abutar was about to go off with a hundred picked horsemen,<sup>1</sup> Ambri Arabi said to him, 'Now, my lion, make good the hopes I place in you!' Abutar went off with his warriors towards the Arab host and gave fierce battle in a fashion none could have excelled, and which was indeed worthy of his prowess. A tumult arose in the Arab host, and the Arabian king mounted and brought out his own guard. Abutar drew them on, fighting. Whenever the host slackened off he would turn about and engage them; and when they came after him he would draw them farther on, never letting them break off. In this way he led them on to the spot where we were—and then Ambri Arabi mounted his chestnut, gave a fierce shout, and said, 'Abutar, you have been as good as your word—yes, by Heaven, you have honoured it! Now see what kind of dchabuki I am, your pupil!'

With that he charged—and at the first onset he lifted a man with his horse up on his spear and dashed both to the ground. Then we all charged, and there was a great battle, with much slaughter of horses and of men—very fierce it was, for the Arabs excel all other dchabukis. But by Heaven, no one who did not see Ambri Arabi then has ever seen a real dchabuki! He was as fierce as was his wont, lifting horses and men together and killing them by dashing them to the ground. But still, even when he had wrought havoc among the vanguard there were still two hundred thousand horsemen behind. After a time, shouting at the Arab host, he drew out his

<sup>1</sup> In modern usage *mkhedari* may have the meaning of 'soldier', and even in the Bible it is used to translate *σπαρτάριος* (John xix. 34). Its derivatives *mkhedruli* and *mkhedroba* signify 'military' and 'army' respectively. On the other hand, the specific concept of 'horse-soldier' does cling to the word, and as it is clear that in this instance the reference is to mounted warriors, 'horseman' is used to translate *mkhedari* wherever it occurs in the remainder of the story.

scimitar. More and yet more did he slaughter—but, excepting him alone, the son of the Arabian king that day excelled all others. At last, as they could not withstand us any longer, the [Arabian] king fled with his whole army. We overtook, slaughtered, or took captive ever more of the Arab host. The Arabian king fled and took refuge with the Khan king in Turkestan, while we laid waste the whole of Arabia, with every one of its castles and cities.

When the Arabian king came to him, the Khan king was grieved beyond measure—for he said to himself, 'Ambri Arabi will come against me now that he has dealt with them!' However, he said to the Arabian king, 'Do not give way to grief—for I am going to seek his<sup>1</sup> blood!' And he sent this summons through his dominions: 'Now is the time for all those of you who bear me any love to come to my aid.' Countless Khan warriors came, and countless others from foreign realms as well.

The Khan king set out—and when they learned of his coming, all the Arabs<sup>2</sup> deserted us and went over to him, because of his being the Arabian king's benefactor. This left us with but a small host, and Ambri Arabi fell into deep gloom. This, however, did not last: for it was the way with him that whenever the enemy drew near he would go out eagerly to meet them.

When they had got within seven days' journey [? of the Arabian capital] the leaders of the Turks' advance guard began to wonder and to think that Ambri Arabi could not be anywhere in that region, since he had not shown himself. After they had been talking like this for a time, however, a tall man on horseback appeared on the plain at the head of a host, and when they saw him [they cried out], 'By Heaven, Ambri Arabi has come after all!' And a tumult arose among their host.

Ambri Arabi charged, and began fighting in his wonted fashion. Behind him he had the Yemeni king's host, but he gave the Turks no chance to join battle with it, for [single-handed] he slaughtered and quickly routed their advance guard.

After that the two, Ambri Arabi and Abutar—lord and retainer—pursued the Turks for seven days, until they had chased them out of Arabia. On the way they killed three thousand men.

Those who escaped went and told the Khan king<sup>3</sup> of their defeat

<sup>1</sup> Reading *missa* for *shensa*.

<sup>2</sup> Presumably an army impressed after the occupation of Arabia.

<sup>3</sup> The Khan king has apparently remained so far with the main body of his

at Ambri Arabi's hands—and this news struck terror into the hearts of his guard. However, the Khan king and the Arabian king came and besieged us in a city which we had occupied with such a great host that it stretched farther than a day's journey.

Every day Ambri Arabi and Abutar fought fearful battles: that was in no wise surprising—but the son of the Arabian king did so too, and none could have quitted himself better than he did. Every day he waxed more terrible.

Now Indo Dchabuki heard how things stood with Ambri Arabi; how his sworn brother was in sore straits, being besieged by Turks and Arabs—and forthwith he set out to go to his aid.

One day as we were sitting on a rampart looking out over the Turks' host we heard a commotion and tumult rise among them: in one place hard fighting had broken out, but we could not see what was happening. Then presently Ambri Arabi rose, looked down, and said, 'It must be that my brother Indo Dchabuki has come!' He called for his horse, went out, charged—and then was there such fierce fighting as we had never seen in all our days! The two brothers met, killed a great number of Turks, and then came in unharmed. The coming of Indo Dchabuki delighted Ambri Arabi as much as if the whole world had come to his aid. They rejoiced and were delighted to see each other.

After that sometimes one, sometimes another would go out and fight: and by your head, there was no deciding which was quitting himself best! One day Ambri Arabi would go out, one day Indo Dchabuki, one day the son of the Arabian king, and another Abutar. And fearful were the battles they had.

One day the Khan king assembled his barons and said to them, 'Human might cannot prevail against those [dchabukis]: we must now try some other means.' Then a hundred picked men were got ready, and the king said, 'This hundred will stay in ambush while the rest join battle: when those [dchabukis] engage, this [hundred] will fall upon them—and then let whatever God wills befall us.'

That day it was Indo Dchabuki's turn to go out: the [Turks'] host came forward, but as soon as they saw Indo they fled. Off he went in pursuit—and then the concealed warriors fell upon him. Ambri Arabi shouted out, 'So you are trying trickery on my brother!—But now you will prove his prowess!'

army within his own borders—in spite of our having been told that he had 'set out', and that the Arabs had deserted to him. The text seems somewhat confused.

Those hundred must indeed have been picked men: by your head, such a battle took place as the tongue [of man] cannot tell of! Of that hundred sixty were killed, and the other forty only just managed to escape. Indo came in in triumph and unharmed, and they sang his praises. Ambri Arabi said, 'No dchabuki like you has been seen upon the earth!'

The next day Ambri Arabi went out, and the Turks tried the same trick upon him. They engaged with him—and, as befitted his prowess, he killed sixty men, while the rest only just managed to escape. Victory was his, and he came in unharmed. On the third day Abutar went out, and he too fought very well: once more the Turks were foiled.

Then that host tried another trick. They brought up lariateers, and on the day when the Arabian king's son did the fighting, these lariateers threw a noose over him.<sup>1</sup> Ambri Arabi and Indo Dchabuki saw this, called for their horses, and went out, telling us to come along as well. We went out and engaged—and then was there such a battle that the tongue of man cannot tell of its size and its boundless fury. But, thanks to the lariat, the Turks had contrived to capture the son of the Arabian king.

As soon as he had caught sight of him, Indo Dchabuki bore down upon the man who had captured the King's son with the lariat, seized him, dashed him to the ground and killed him. Then he released the son of the Arabian king and continued with the battle. At length the Arabian king and the Khan king fled with their guards, and we pursued them with slaughter.

Ambri Arabi overtook the Khan king, recognized him, and said, 'Oh King, once before I overtook you on a day of ill-fortune, and had you in my power. Then I showed your kingship fitting respect and let you go: but now that you have come once again seeking the death of my lord what can save you from me?' With that he struck the Khan king with his scimitar and killed him—and at the same time Indo Dchabuki overtook the Arabian king and killed him. We utterly destroyed their host, and then after three days turned about and went back in triumph to Arabia.

Great was the rejoicing then! The son of the Arabian king secured the whole of Arabia. Indo Dchabuki made a long sojourn there, and the Arabian king<sup>2</sup> and Ambri bestowed countless gifts

<sup>1</sup> Enemies are frequently lassoed in the *Shāhnāma*. *Shāhnāma* (W), ii, pp. 52, 54, 97, 133; iii, pp. 189, 228, 230, &c.

<sup>2</sup> Sc. the son of the exiled king.

upon him before they set him upon his way home. To the Yemeni<sup>1</sup> host too the Arabian king gave great rewards, and then it went home to Yemen.

The man [who had told the story] said, 'Amiran Darejanisdze, all that I have told you I have seen with my own eyes, having been a witness of it. As for the tales one hears—they are beyond counting.' Then Amiran Darejanisdze asked him, 'When did you leave Arabia?' And he replied, 'A year and a half ago.' Amiran asked, 'What age is this man?' He replied, 'He is now thirty-five.'<sup>2</sup> Again Amiran asked, 'Was he still in Arabia when you left?' And the man replied, 'He is in Arabia now.'

Then Amiran Darejanisdze gave him thanks and told me to bring out a piece of rich raiment. I brought one, and he bestowed it upon the man. Then he said, 'By God in Heaven and the life of my lord Emir Mumli<sup>3</sup> of Baghdad, you have told me a fine story of the deeds of a good dchabuki! Now I must not fail to see him: be my guide, and we shall go to Arabia.' We grieved much at this, for we would fain have spent a little time at home—and the road to Arabia was hard and perilous.

Amiran had treasures and suits of armour got ready for him to take with him, and he called for many horses and steeds, and for measureless quantities of rich raiment. He assembled too ten thousand picked warriors and ordered a great store of delicacies, saying, 'As he is such a good dchabuki we must stay with him for some time, and there must be show of honour, bestowal of gifts, and entertainment. So it behoves us to go well prepared.' Then, after he had taken leave of Emir Mumli of Baghdad, we accoutred ourselves and set out—Amiran Darejanisdze himself; Aban Kabanisdze; Ali Momadisdze; Asan Badridze; Qamar Qamareli; Kowos Kosidze; I, Savarsamidze;<sup>4</sup> and the ten thousand warriors besides.

After one day's journey we met some men wearing black: we

<sup>1</sup> Reading *iamant'a* for *imat't'a*.

<sup>2</sup> This exchange over Ambri's age constitutes the most striking of those correspondences whose precision suggests that in the case of Ambri's story *Amiran-Darejaniani* has primacy over the popular tradition (cf. Nutsubidze, p. 168). See note F, p. 233.

<sup>3</sup> A corruption of the Arabic *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, 'The Commander of the Faithful': sc. the Caliph.

<sup>4</sup> In all other instances where the list of Amiran's retainers is rehearsed Savarsamidze's name follows that of his lord, thus emphasizing the primacy that is clearly his.

asked them why they did so, and they told us, 'That lion of lions, that peerless dchabuki Ambri Arabi is dead<sup>1</sup>—and because of this the whole of Arabia and of Yemen is in black.' Amiran Darejanisdze grieved sorely over the death of Ambri Arabi, and we turned about and went back to Baghdad. Here end the chapters of Ambri Arabi and of the coming of Indo Dchabuki into Arabia. May the Majesty of your reign know no ending: may it endure for ever, Amen.

<sup>1</sup> This incident of the meeting with the mourners has a certain flavour of balladry, but while it may indeed derive from some old tale, the episode in popular tradition as preserved in modern times which in some measure corresponds with it (Nutsubidze, pp. 176-8; Dchidchinadze, pp. 335-6), in which Amiran meets Ambri's corpse on a cart, is one of those in which it seem probable that primacy lies with *Amiran-Darejaniani*.



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*The Story of the Stars*

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King of Kings give ear: may you live for ever! May God prosper your friends and bring confusion upon those who are false to you!—Emir Mumli of Baghdad sat feasting, with Abram, first among the viziers, and Ajer, first among the chamberlains, at his side. Presently Emir Mumli's three sons came in. Fine youths they were, grown to manhood, but as yet not one of them had a wife. The barons seated at the feast looked at them and said, 'We declare—not because they are the king's sons, but because it is the plain truth—that never have there been such youths in the city of Baghdad: we have not heard of their like from our fathers!'

When the princes had come in and sat down Abram,<sup>2</sup> first among the viziers, and Ajer, first among the chamberlains, rose and said to Emir Mumli of Baghdad, 'King of Kings, may you live for ever! Well do we realize our presumption in thus addressing you, but we should be failing in our duty if we did not speak to you of something that touches the welfare of Baghdad, your capital, and of Your Majesty yourself.' Emir Mumli replied, 'Speak, Abram, first among the viziers, and Ajer, first among the chamberlains! I know that you will not say anything foolish.' Then Abram and Ajer went on, 'Oh King, may you live [for ever]! No one has ever seen such fine youths as your sons: but, although they have grown to manhood, as yet not one of them has a wife; and this is a source of much sorrow to your realm.'

When Emir Mumli of Baghdad heard this, he replied, 'You have my thanks for your devotion, for concerning yourselves with all that touches me.—I know myself that my realm feels much sorrow over this, and that you are all uneasy. God knows I would fain have them married, but nowhere have I been able to find brides worthy of them. I know that the daughter of the Greek king,<sup>3</sup> the

<sup>1</sup> See note G, p. 233.

<sup>2</sup> Abraham.

<sup>3</sup> To a twelfth-century writer the Greek monarch could, of course, only be the Byzantine emperor.

daughter of the Indian king,<sup>1</sup> and the daughter of the Khazar king<sup>2</sup> have been offered to me—but these are not good enough for my sons.'

Abram, first among the viziers, and Ajer, first among the chamberlains, said, 'Oh King, may you live for ever! In this matter we must have recourse to Amiran Darejanisdze; the good in heart, the wise in understanding, the skilled in negotiation. He has travelled in many lands and is versed in all the concerns of foreign peoples. He may either have seen for himself or heard of some country in the world where fair princesses are to be found. We would submit that if such could be won by negotiation it would be for us to bring them; but that should it be needful to bring them from some distant land by force of arms, it would be a matter for him.'

Emir Mumli said, 'Well, we shall go to Amiran Darejanisdze's hall, and there we shall talk the business over with him.' Then he told his three sons, and Abram and Ajer as well, to get ready, and they set out.

King of Kings, give ear: may you live for ever!—Amiran Darejanisdze was sitting feasting in his hall with his retainers seated round about him when one of the king's men came in and said, 'Emir Mumli of Baghdad is coming to your hall with his three sons: he has also with him Abram, first among the viziers, and Ajer, first among the chamberlains.' Astonished, Amiran Darejanisdze said, 'What can be the cause of their coming? Can some enemy be bearing down on us—can this be what brings them?' Then he went out to receive them, made obeisance, and said, 'Emir of Emirs, may you live for ever! I must offer thanks for your coming here. It lies beyond my power to do Your Majesty any sufficient service in return; but such condescension as this must win much praise!'

Emir Mumli gave him thanks and said to him, 'Here I am entering the hall of [one who is to me as] my father!'<sup>3</sup> They went indoors and sat down, and then Amiran Darejanisdze said, 'Oh King, may you live for ever! Since you have condescended to come to your

<sup>1</sup> As with Abesalom, to whom these tales are being narrated, that other 'Indian King', this personage may be assumed to be a figure of pure fancy.

<sup>2</sup> References to the Khazars in the *Iskandarnāma* suggest that memories of them were still fresh in Caucasia in the twelfth century. On the decline of the Khazar power, see D. M. Dunlop, *The History of the Jewish Khazars*, Princeton, 1954, pp. 254-8.

<sup>3</sup> Formula.

liegeman's door, a feast must be spread for you—and by Your Majesty's head, I will present you with something of such beauty as has never been seen by the eye of man!' And Emir Mumli gave him thanks.

After the feast Amiran gave Emir Mumli much more than could be reckoned up—heavy gold brocades<sup>1</sup> of every kind, and other rare gold ones as well, a score of each: also steeds of every breed, one hundred of each, and countless jewels and pearls. And after that Amiran Darejanisdze went out and fetched a casket encrusted with jewels and pearls and fitted with a golden key, opened it and took out a wondrous crown. I shall not now speak of the jewels set therein, save for three—one white, one green, and one red—which shone so when the crown was placed in the dark as to have allowed a scribe to write or a craftsman to ply his trade.<sup>2</sup> Whoever looked at that crown was astounded at its brilliance. Amiran also bestowed many and countless gifts upon the [Emir's] sons and upon all the barons.

Emir Mumli thanked him, and then said, 'Enough, best of all dchabukis! Or do you suppose that it was only for this that I have come to your hall? Now the business is this: look at these sons of mine—I am not going to boast of them, but in truth the eye of man has never looked on such youths! Now I would have them wed to brides good enough for them—and that is what I would ask of you. As for the great and wondrous gifts you have bestowed on me, I shall not be content to respond with mere thanks: I am a monarch, and will know how to reward you at a fitting time.'

Amiran Darejanisdze made obeisance and replied, 'Oh King, may you live for ever! You would have brides for your sons—well, here is my answer. I have travelled over the whole world, but nowhere have I seen ladies good enough for them! I know that the daughter of the Greek king, the daughter of the Indian king, and the daughter of the Khazar king have all been offered to you, and that you could not be satisfied with these. Still—I promise Your Majesty that whatever land you send me to, I will not spare myself: either I will meet my death or I will fulfil your heart's desire. As for these gifts—you need not thank me for them; for everything [I possess] was given to me by you and comes from that good

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Shāhnāma* (W), ii, p. 88; iii, pp. 26, 28, 241, 269, 356, &c.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the descriptions of jewels in R 1441 and 1566: 'Beside it a painter could have painted a picture at night'; 'A jewel . . . that at night sheds light like the sun'.

fortune which you have enjoyed.' Emir Mumli gave him thanks, and then went off to his own hall. And Aban Kabanisdze said, 'That man is going to set us on a road on which we are sure to have our fill of sorrow!'

The next day Emir Mumli of Baghdad summoned Amiran Darejanisdze. When he came in for the feast [Amiran saw that] they had given him a place by the throne. Emir Mumli rose, bade him come over, and put him in his seat. We seated ourselves likewise. We had good entertainment, and then when the feast had come to an end Emir Mumli bestowed countless gifts upon Amiran. In return for the crown he gave him five hundred villages, and upon us likewise he bestowed rich raiment and countless gifts. And after that we went off.

Emir Mumli of Baghdad was looking for the man who could tell him where he should seek brides for his sons; but he could not find him.

Next he said to Abram, first among the viziers, and Ajer, first among the chamberlains, 'You are two of our barons, and have more wit than the others: so go and look for brides good enough for my sons.' And he gave them one month, saying, 'By Heaven, if you fail to find someone who knows [where such are to be found], I will cut off your heads!' Then they withdrew in gloom and went home. They agreed between them, 'One of us will set out eastward and the other westward; and after thirty days we will meet here in the maidan.—Perhaps God will grant us success!'

They set off on their journeys and made inquiry, but they met with no one on the way who could help them: then on the thirtieth day they met in the maidan and told each other of all that had passed. They grieved, and said, 'There is nothing for us to do save go and see to the well-being of our homes and children, and then go to our lord Emir Mumli and let him do as he will with us.'

And so they went off, much dejected. Presently they saw a white elephant upon the plain, with a richly-adorned howdah upon it in which sat a fine-looking man, turned grey,<sup>1</sup> with at his side a lady who was as radiant as the sun. Before them stood wine, and viands were set out by their hands. They sat on richly-adorned seats of purple, and seemed both to be clad in that same colour. To the rear, on either side, followed two attendants on horseback, also splendidly attired.

<sup>1</sup> Reading *mkhce* for *mkhec*.

Such was the fashion of that [grey-haired] man's approach. Abram and Ajer said, 'Here is a man to marvel at—he must come from some distant land! Now let us take him home with us: perhaps he could put us on the track of what we are seeking.'

They went up and gave him greeting. He responded, and there was exchange of courtesies. They had some talk together, and then Abram and Ajer offered [the stranger] their hospitality, and conducted him to their apartments, where they lodged him, showed him honour, and entertained him. But during that day they disclosed nothing. When night fell they sat down to feast—and then the unknown man said, 'You have treated us strangers very well: now, if you have any request to put to me, speak.' Abram and Ajer replied, 'We have nothing to ask of you: we could see that you were a man of worth, and we liked the look of you—that is why we bade you be our guest.' Nevertheless, they told him of what their lord desired, save that they did not say, 'If we fail, he means to cut off our heads.'

Then the unknown man said, 'Do not be troubled because you have not achieved success in this matter. As you have given me hospitality, I am going to put you on the track. First, however, I shall tell you something about myself. I am Abutalib<sup>1</sup> the Wanderer, and, thanks to the planet under which I was born, I can go anywhere in safety—for the man is not born who can do me harm. I come of a line of barons, and was one myself, but I renounced everything, and now I roam over the earth. I have journeyed wherever under the heavens dry land is to be found, and many a day too have I spent at sea. I am versed in the affairs of every land—and had your lord a man who could bear them off, by Heaven I could tell you of maidens whose like are not upon the face of all the earth! But I can tell you here and now that there is indeed no way in which they could be carried off.'

Abram and Ajer asked, 'Where can there be a land impossible to bear maidens off from?' And he replied, 'It is one of great size and very fair, and it is called the Land of the Stars. There, in great magnificence and endless pomp rules King Aspan:<sup>2</sup> there too dwell the Seven Stars, his daughters, whose beauty is not to be told of by the tongue of man. He keeps them close in splendid apartments, and none save himself may see them. I declare too that the men of

<sup>1</sup> (Abū Ṭalib.)

<sup>2</sup> *Asp'an.*

that land excel all others—but take me to Emir Mumli of Baghdad, and I shall tell him everything myself.’

Then Abram, first among the viziers, and Ajer, first among the chamberlains, rejoiced and hastened off. When they came before him at court Emir Mumli said to them, ‘So you have returned!’ And they replied, ‘We have come before you!’ Then he inquired, ‘Now, have you in truth found out anything?’ And they replied, ‘Emir of Emirs, may you live [for ever]! We have found a man by the name of Abutalib the Wanderer who can give aid in this matter, and he will tell you everything himself.’

Then Emir Mumli gave orders for Abutalib to be brought in, and he was brought at once into his presence. He made obeisance, and then Emir Mumli of Baghdad said to him. ‘Abutalib the Wanderer, tell me about the Star folk and the land of King Aspan.’ And then Abutalib told him of the grandeur and might of the Star King, of the multitude of his champions and warriors, and of the beauty of those Stars his daughters. He ended, ‘No way is there for any man to win there to carry them off by force—but if you have any man who is false to you, send him and he will assuredly be killed.’

Emir Mumli bestowed great gifts upon him, then called for his horse and went off to Amiran Darejanisdze’s abode, taking with him Abutalib, the man who could aid them. When he arrived, Amiran Darejanisdze came out to meet him, and made obeisance, and then they went in through the great<sup>1</sup> gate and sat down.

The king said, ‘Amiran Darejanisdze, now the time has come to put you to the proof, since you have promised to fetch wives for my sons: this man will explain everything.’ Amiran Darejanisdze made obeisance to the king and replied, ‘I stand before you to serve you.’ Then Amiran Darejanisdze questioned Abutalib, and Abutalib told him about that land [of the Stars]. At the end he said, ‘Do not try to reach it—no man could win his way in!’ But Amiran Darejanisdze only replied, ‘Just tell me all you can about it, and do not seek to give me advice—I will go or not as I choose.’ Then Abutalib said, ‘I know no more: but if only you can succeed in bearing off those Star maidens—by Heaven, their like has not been seen by the eye of man!’ Then Amiran Darejanisdze said to his lord, ‘Oh King, may you live for ever! As I have already promised, I will either serve you in this matter or meet my death!’

<sup>1</sup> Literally, ‘royal’.

Emir Mumli gave him thanks, once more Amiran Darejanisdze bestowed great gifts upon him, and the king went off.

That same day Amiran Darejanisdze made ready, and asked Abutalib, 'Should I take a host with me, or not?' Abutalib replied, 'You should not: take only a few tried men: but once again I urge you to give up all thought of this business!' Then Amiran said, 'If you say that once more you will never have another chance to advise me!<sup>1</sup>—Now tell me, what sort of road is it?' Abutalib replied, 'It is a good one, and no enemy will attack you on it: but once you have reached the Land of the Stars you will have hard fighting!' Amiran said to him, 'Be my guide and take me there.' Abutalib replied, 'I will not guide you myself, but I will give you a servant of mine, and he will take you along the right road.' To be short—we made ready to set out.

Here is Amiran Darejanisdze's journey to the Land of the Stars to bear off the Star daughters of King Aspan for the sons of Emir Mumli of Baghdad, and the great battles he had there

And so, having taken leave of Emir Mumli and invoked God's protection, we set out and journeyed on our way—Amiran Darejanisdze himself; I, Savarsamidze; Aban Kabanisdze; Ali Momadisdze; Asan Badridze; Qamar Qamareli; and Kowos Kosidze—with that servant of Abutalib's as our guide. King of Kings, give ear: may you live for ever!—After we had journeyed for twenty days we met with a great host of brigands upon a plain. They were not men of the land through which we were then passing, but were come from somewhere else.—May God have those who are false to you overwhelmed as they were then! After every fight we had, Abutalib's servant would say, 'Many battles have I witnessed, but [in none of them have I seen any] who could match your prowess!'

We went on, killing beasts on the way whenever we met with them. For two months we journeyed on without having any notion where we were. It would take much too long if I were to tell of all the battles we fought on that road. After we had journeyed on for two months<sup>2</sup> Abutalib's servant deserted us. We [retainers] were much distressed at this, as we did not know which way to take. Aban Kabanisdze said, 'When first I saw that big, bearded fellow,

<sup>1</sup> By reason of having been put to death.

<sup>2</sup> This statement about journeying on for two months is probably repetitive.

I felt sure that he would trick us when we were out!' on the road. We all began to grumble, and were for turning about—at which Amiran Darejanisdze became angry and said, 'It is unworthy of good dchabukis to talk as you are doing! By God in Heaven and the life of my lord Emir Mumli of Baghdad, I am not going to go back because I have not found the right road!'—We went on, and presently upon the plain we saw some fine shady trees, with a delightful stream flowing beneath them. Amiran Darejanisdze said, 'We shall have our meal under those trees.'

He dismounted—and then, after we had sat down, we saw a man coming towards us over the plain riding on an ambling camel. He was clad in white, with a white turban wound round his head. As we had not set eyes on anyone for a long time, we were glad to see him, and we called to him. He came up, dismounted, and made obeisance to Amiran Darejanisdze, who told him to sit down. We invited him to join us in our meal, and then we ate. Afterwards Darejanisdze asked him, 'Who are you, brother, and where do you come from?' To which the man replied, 'My lord, where are *you* going? I am indeed astonished to encounter you in such a land as this accompanied by so few men. As for what you ask of me—I am one who journeys over the earth.'

Amiran Darejanisdze said to us, 'If we tell this man about ourselves perhaps he will tell us something in return.' We said, 'Tell him'—and Amiran told him all. When he had done the man laughed and said, 'I was sure from the first that you had been sent to this land by my brother Abutalib, for no one else knows anything of it. Now, as you have been frank with me, and as I can see already that you are a good dchabuki, I will speak to you truthfully likewise. Let me tell you that I am Abutalib's brother, and that like him I journey over the earth. And now, as you have not concealed your business from me, I will make you as well acquainted with the affairs of the land [of the Stars] and with the marshalling of its dchabukis as though you had seen it with your own eyes. And I will show you the way myself, and bring you to it.'

Amiran gave him thanks, and we rejoiced greatly that we had found such a man. Then he continued, 'I can see that you are good dchabukis, and such lions that no one, by Heaven, would have any chance of vanquishing you!' Yet better would it have been for you had you not come this way!—However, now that you

<sup>1</sup> The interpretation of this statement is doubtful.



have come thus far, there can be no turning back. The journey, by Heaven, is hard and difficult, but commend yourselves to God and be of good courage. Now let us go on, and I shall tell you about that land and of its many dchabukis.<sup>1</sup>

We went on, and he began with his account.

Within the city itself there are ten champions, such as no man can stand against. However, unless a foreign host has first come up to the gates of the capital, they will not be drawn into distant fighting.<sup>1</sup> Of these ten champions four receive a thousand drachmas a day each, and the other six five hundred each. The horsemen are countless, well armed, and lacking for nothing. Over them there are set captains who are one and all lion-dchabukis.<sup>2</sup> The people of the land believe that no enemy can fight with [this host], but the cities in which they are quartered are much irked by their presence, and are wearied of them.

Some time since the news reached King Aspan that Swimon,<sup>3</sup> son of the Chinese king; Lasur, son of the Dailami king; Khosro, son of the Khazar king; and Iaman Dchabuki,<sup>4</sup> son of the Yemeni king, were coming to bear off his Star daughters. Then King Aspan said, 'Grievous is my life to me, since my enemies are coming seeking to overwhelm me: but perhaps, oh God, You will lend Your aid to make them rue this invasion of our realm, and their design of bearing off my Star daughters.'

Then King Aspan gave orders for the muster of a host, and marshalled the strength of the whole realm. He put his captains under the command of his two army-leaders, one of whom was called Losor Losominisdze and the other Kabar Kavidze<sup>5</sup>—lion-dchabukis these were, and proved in battle. To the one he gave two hundred thousand warriors, to the other a hundred and fifty thousand. Then he commanded Losor, the one who had the two hundred thousand, to go out to join battle with Swimon, son of the Chinese king, and Khosro, son of the Khazar king. Losor went out to meet these, and they too advanced. Fierce was the fighting—by your head, for three days the battle raged ceaselessly,

<sup>1</sup> Literally, 'unless a foreign host goes up to the gates of the capital, they will not come out to do battle in other provinces'.

<sup>2</sup> This sentence and the one preceding have been transposed from the beginning of the speech. <sup>3</sup> Simon.

<sup>4</sup> Not, of course, to be identified with the father of Badri Iamanisdze (see pp. 30, 38).

<sup>5</sup> *K'abar K'avidze*.

with changing fortune; but in the end King Aspan's host was routed, Losor Losominisdze, the first among all the king's dchabukis,<sup>1</sup> killed, and that countless army destroyed.

Then Kabar Kavidze went out with his hundred and fifty thousand marshalled men to meet Iaman Dchabuki, son of the Yemeni king, and Lasur, son of the Dailami king. There was a battle—and this host too was routed and slaughtered. Lasur killed Kabar Kavidze with his own hand.

The news [of these defeats] reached us, and King Aspan was grieved beyond measure. Swimon, Khosro, and Iaman laid waste the whole of his realm, then came up and are now at the gates of the capital—on the one hand Swimon, son of the Chinese king, and Khosro, son of the Khazar king: on the other Iaman Dchabuki, son of the Yemeni king. Countless are their hosts! They are demanding the Star maidens of the king, and soon there will be battle between them and his champions. What the end will be only God knows.

Besides these princely dchabukis, six highly-praised aznauris<sup>2</sup>—Jazdan Parsadanisdze,<sup>3</sup> Kamar Kurdi,<sup>4</sup> Bolosor Basreli,<sup>5</sup> Parsadan<sup>6</sup> Rabashinisdze, Amrad Rabagisdze, and Juar Kaniminisdze<sup>7</sup>—have come. They have been holding themselves apart, but none the less they too have come in quest of the Star maidens. And now you have come! These dchabukis will assuredly have great and fierce battles; among themselves, with those in the city<sup>8</sup>—and with you too! And what the outcome will be, only God knows.

When he had told us all this Amiran Darejanisdze said, 'He has given a good account of everything—and has also made it clear that there are many good dchabukis there, and that I have fierce fighting before me. But it is all for the best!'

We continued on our way, and then presently our guide went on ahead and told the princes<sup>9</sup> of Amiran Darejanisdze's coming. Those princely dchabukis asked Husen,<sup>10</sup> the brother of Abutalib, 'Is this Amiran Darejanisdze that dchabuki of Baghdad of whose

<sup>1</sup> In the text, 'champions' (*bumberast'a*).

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A, p. 235.

<sup>3</sup> *P'arsadanisdze*.

<sup>4</sup> *K'amar K'urdi*. Literally, 'Kamar the Kurd'.

<sup>5</sup> Literally, 'Bolosor the Basran'.

<sup>6</sup> *P'arsadan*.

<sup>7</sup> *K'animinisdze*.

<sup>8</sup> Literally, 'with those outside [their own number]'.

<sup>9</sup> *Mep'e* is thus rendered when applied to the kings' sons.

<sup>10</sup> (Husain.)

prowess we have already heard?'—for Amiran was a man renowned over all the earth. And Husen, the brother of Abutalib, replied, 'It is indeed he of whom Your Highnesses speak.'

Then those four princely dchabukis made ready, went out to meet Amiran, and exchanged greetings with him. By your head, you could not find a host better equipped than those of the princes! The princes rejoiced to see Amiran Darejanisdze. Afterwards the aznauris came out to meet him, and they too rejoiced beyond measure to see us.

The coming of Amiran Darejanisdze to King Aspan's gates

When King Aspan learned of our coming he sent a man with this message: 'Amiran Darejanisdze, I have come already to esteem you, having heard from afar of your valour and prowess. Welcome! And now that you have appeared before us, let there be battle and wine-drinking in our presence at such times as you may choose.' Amiran Darejanisdze sent this reply: 'Oh King, may you live for ever!—I have indeed seen many battles, but I am grieved by the thought that you will not find in me all that you have heard tell of.' The messenger went off and told all: then he came back again with raiment and other great gifts.

The following day Swimon, son of the Chinese king, summoned us to be his guests, along with Khosro, son of the Khazar king; Iaman Dchabuki, son of the Yemeni king; and Lasur, son of the Dailami king. Swimon, Khosro, Iaman, and Lasur sat facing each other, and they had also seated by them the aznauris Jazdan Parsadanisdze, Kamar Kurdi, Bolosor Basreli, Parsadan Rabashinisdze, Amrad Rabagisdze, and Juar Kaniminisdze. We went over, lord and retainers—Amiran Darejanisdze himself, I, Savarsamidze, Aban Kabanisdze, Ali Momadisdze, Asan Badridze, Qamar Qamareli, and Kowos Kosidze.

The four princes rose, came forward to greet us, took Amiran Darejanisdze over and placed him in his seat amongst themselves. They set us in our places also and brought in viands and spread a feast for us. And there was singing and diversion.

During the feast King Aspan sent a man to Swimon, son of the Chinese king, and to Khosro, son of the Khazar king, with this message: 'You have slaughtered my host and ravaged my realm, with the intent of bearing off my Star daughters. Well, now I am going to send out my champions—and let such of you as may so

choose come out to fight!' Then Swimon, son of the Chinese king, charged the messenger with this reply: 'I will come out tomorrow: send out one of your champions, and he will find out what kind of dchabuki I am! This will I tell you also: there are many famous dchabukis here—and by your head, they are certainly going to bear off your Star daughters to their homes.'

The messenger withdrew and we put an end to the feast. Swimon, son of the Chinese king, bestowed great gifts upon all, and then we separated.

Here is the battle of Swimon, son of the Chinese king,  
and one of the champions

When day had broken and the sun was spreading its light over the earth, clarioneers and taborers appeared, and all the burgesses and warriors took their places upon terraces. King Aspan seated himself on a dais, and the queen, his Star daughters, and his barons sat round about him. The king held a feast, minstrels sang, and tumblers performed. When, from afar, we saw the king's Star daughters, we said, 'Never have their like been seen upon the earth!'

One of the champions came out into the maidan, armed for battle; and then on our side Swimon, son of the Chinese king, put on his armour—by Your Majesty's head, he was a sight good enough for the eye of man!

They circled round each other at the gallop, charged, shouted and engaged—by your head, it was a fierce enough battle! They fought on until midday—and then Swimon, son of the Chinese king, shouted, 'Watch, King Aspan: now you will see what the prowess of your champion comes to!'—charged, struck [the champion's] helmet with his scimitar, cleft him to the breast, and killed him instantly. When we saw what had happened we sang the praises of Swimon, son of the Chinese king. King Aspan was much grieved, but all the burgesses rejoiced.<sup>1</sup>—We separated for the day and each of us went to his own tent.

The following day Khosro, son of the Khazar king, summoned us to be his guests. The princes sat down in the same order as before, and they called Amiran over and put him in the same

<sup>1</sup> Presumably at the removal of one of those champions whose presence they found irksome (see p. 74).

position. They held a feast, and minstrels sang and tumblers performed.

During the feast King Aspan sent the same man as before to Khosro, son of the Khazar king, with a message of the same kind: 'Let there be battle tomorrow between you and one of my champions!' Khosro, son of the Khazar king, laughed and sent the reply: 'The great victory won by your first champion has made you arrogant!' To be short, they determined upon battle for the following day, and we put an end to the feast. Khosro, son of the [Khazar] king, bestowed great gifts upon all, and we separated for the day.

Here is the battle of Khosro, son of the Khazar king, and  
one of the champions

When day had broken King Aspan seated himself once more upon the dais, and placed round about him the queen, those Stars his daughters, and all the barons. He held a feast and minstrels sang and tumblers performed as before. The burgesses<sup>1</sup> took their places, and clarions and tabors were sounded.

The son of the Khazar king, an archer of unsurpassed skill, girt his quiver about his waist and then came out. The champion was already armed and mounted: he had covered the weak places with a breastplate.

Khosro, son of the Khazar king, came out: they circled round each other at the gallop, charged—and then as they neared each other the son of the Khazar king struck [the champion's] breast with an arrow. The strength of his armour could not protect him: the arrow pierced his breastplate as if it had been a piece of cloth and killed him.

The [king's] warriors were delighted and sang [Khosro's] praises, but [the princes and aznauris] thought it shameful of the Khazar king's son to have had resort to an arrow for killing. King Aspan was grieved, moreover, and said to himself, 'What has he done!'

We separated: the next day passed—then on the third Iaman Dchabuki, son of the Yemeni king, summoned us to be his guests. A chair had been set for Amiran Darejanisdze, and the princes sat down in the same order as before. When we arrived they came out to greet us and invited our lord to enter. They sat down and held a feast: there was drinking and diversion, and girls sang.

Presently a man came in, went up to Iaman Dchabuki, and

<sup>1</sup> Reading *mok'alak'eni* for *mis k'alak'sa erni*.

delivered this message from King Aspan: 'So far God has accorded victory to you [princes], but my third champion will come out tomorrow: so let there be battle between you and him.' Iaman Dchabuki sent this reply: 'We realize, oh King, since you are having us kill them off, that these men must have grown wearisome to you!—I shall be ready tomorrow.' We put an end to the feast, Iaman Dchabuki bestowed gifts upon all, and we separated for the day.

Here is the great battle of Iaman Dchabuki and one of  
the champions

When day had broken King Aspan seated himself once more with the queen and his daughters, and placed his barons round about him, while all the burgesses took their places to watch. The clarions and tabors were sounded, and one of King Aspan's champions came out: he seemed to be not even trying to conceal his fear and with no wish for battle—but he had no choice.

From our side Iaman Dchabuki, son of the Yemeni king, came out: they engaged fiercely and fought together. Then presently, seeming to disdain the champion, Iaman Dchabuki threw away his scimitar, charged, shouted, lifted him from his saddle, hurled him so that he hit the ground a long way off, and then killed him. Amazed were we at that tremendous feat of prowess! After that we separated for the day.

Next Lasur, son of the Dailami king, summoned us to be his guests. The princes and the other dchabukis sat in the same order as before, and they set Amiran Darejanisdze's chair in the same place. Then we went over, and the four princes came out to greet us, lord and retainers. They called Amiran to the place of honour, while we sat down facing them. Then they held a feast. The furnishings of the tent we now saw far surpassed those of any of the others. By your head, every man of us had before him a golden goblet from among Lasur's store of table-vessels. So we sat feasting, five hundred of us, and sang and enjoyed ourselves. Sweet-voiced minstrels sang, tumblers performed, and there was gaiety and mirth. Then the same attendant came once more from King Aspan with this message for Lasur, son of the Dailami king: 'Tomorrow let you and my fourth champion do battle: you too must show your worth.' Then Lasur, son of the Dailami king, laughed and said to the attendant, 'Say: "I know what you have done already for [three

of] your champions, and I am ready to do my part [in the matter of the fourth]!" ' Then they determined upon battle for the following day. During the banquet the son of the Dailami king bestowed countless gifts upon all: then we put an end to the feast for the day and went each to his own tent.

Here is the battle of Lasur, son of the Dailami king, and  
the fourth champion

When day had broken and the sun had sent forth its light, King Aspan seated himself with his queen and daughters on the dais once more, and placed his barons round about him. He held a feast, sweet-voiced minstrels sang, the clarioneers and taborers came forward, and the burgesses crowded to their places to watch.

The fourth champion came out into the maidan with a fierce demeanour, and shouted battle-threats. Lasur, son of the Dailami king, came out magnificently armed—a dread warrior truly was he! He took a spear and cried out, 'Amiran Darejanisdze, judge now from my onslaught what kind of dchabuki I am!' With that he charged, shouted, struck the champion on the breast with his spear, and killed him. We sang the praises of Lasur, son of the Dailami king, but King Aspan was grieved, for now he had had all his champions killed.

We separated for the day, and [Amiran and we his retainers] went and sat in our tent. Now we retainers were wondering why it was that no one had been sent out to do battle with our lord, and thinking that perhaps the king was determined not to surrender his Star daughters to him, come what might. But Amiran Darejanisdze said, 'Say what you like, by God in Heaven and the head of my lord Emir Mumli of Baghdad, I am going to bear off the three fairest for my lord's sons: as for those others—they can do what they will.'

Several days went by without King Aspan's sending out anyone else to give battle to the four princes. At length they met together and sent a baron to King Aspan with this message: 'Do not bring down more trouble on yourself, or put any more difficulties in our way! Give us your daughters to be our wives—your land has suffered enough at our hands! Then we shall go away and you will possess your own realm once more. However, if you still have some [mighty] warriors left, send them out, and we will do battle before you!'

The king sent this answer: 'Great misfortunes and calamities are still in store for you—do not be impatient! I have six champions left, and these I am going to send out to engage the six aznauris, to put them also to the proof and to make clear their worth as dchabukis.' And they determined upon battle for the following day.

Here is the battle of the six aznauris and the six champions

When day had broken King Aspan took his seat upon the dais once more and the clarioneers and all the onlookers came forward. The six champions came out from the city, and from our side Jazdan Parsadanisdze, Kamar Kurdi, Bolosor Basreli, Parsadan Rabashinisdze, Amrad Rabagisdze, and Juar Kaniminisdze went out. Tremendous was the battle those twelve had! This was fiercer fighting than any that had gone before, and it lasted for a long time. In the end King Aspan's champions lost heart and fled—but the aznauris overtook them and killed them at the city gates. After that the aznauris withdrew—and Amiran Darejanisdze said, 'Never can so many miserable champions<sup>1</sup> have been seen together in one place!'

The following day Amiran Darejanisdze sent this message to King Aspan: 'By Heaven, it is time that these battles came to an end—and yet you have not sent out anyone to do battle with me!' The king sent this reply: 'Do not be impatient, Amiran Darejanisdze! I have a warrior to meet you too. My champions may not have had great success as yet, but they will not waste much more time in idle trifling.'

After some time had gone by Amiran Darejanisdze said, 'Those princes, and also the aznauris who are in their company, must in their turn come to us.' I replied, 'By your head, yes indeed they must!' Then he charged Kowos Kosidze with this message: 'Great princes, will you condescend to accept entertainment in the tent of a simple liegeman?'

Kowos Kosidze went and delivered this message to the princes. They were gratified and sent the reply, 'It will be like coming to the house of a father!' And we bade the aznauris come as well.

They all came, and Amiran went out to meet them. They went inside, sat down in the same order as before, and enjoyed themselves, with song and much gaiety. Then King Aspan sent the same attendant as before with this message: 'Great princes, you

<sup>1</sup> Sc. as those killed.



have come up to my gates and been victorious in many battles. Yet, if instead of coming yourselves you had sent from your own homes asking for them, I should gladly have given you my daughters to wife. However, since you have come into my realm intent on bearing off my Star daughters, either for yourselves or [in one instance] for the sons of a lord, your arms must be tested; you must prove yourselves upon each other and thereby earn fame—that will be prowess indeed! Now do you, Swimon, son of the Chinese king, engage Amiran Darejanisdze, and let us see what the two of you are really worth as dchabukis.’

Amiran Darejanisdze gave this reply: ‘I am the servant of all who are of royal blood,<sup>1</sup> and never will I challenge any such to combat: but send out any warrior you yourself have with you, and by Heaven we will fight together!’ This message, however, gave Swimon, son of the Chinese king, the idea that Amiran Darejanisdze was afraid of him—which made Darejanisdze say, when he realized that his message was being taken as a sign of fear, ‘Prince Swimon, we must do as you choose in this matter.’

There was much talk and argument over the business—but to be short, they determined upon battle for the following day. Presently King Aspan sent the princes this message: ‘Amiran Darejanisdze is my [champion]: he will be fighting for me.’ That day our lord bestowed upon the princes great gifts, such as befitted them, and then we separated.

In the morning King Aspan sent a man to Amiran Darejanisdze with raiment and countless gifts, also with this message: ‘Since you are appearing for me, do battle with them all in such fashion as befits the trust you have in your prowess.’

Here is the battle of Amiran Darejanisdze and Swimon,  
son of the Chinese king

When day had broken and the sun had spread its light over the earth, King Aspan seated himself upon the dais once more, the queen placed herself by his side, and he placed his Star daughters and all his barons round about. He held a feast, and minstrels sang and tumblers performed.

Amiran Darejanisdze put on his armour and went out into the maidan: everyone said, ‘Nobody has ever seen a dchabuki like him

<sup>1</sup> Literally, ‘of all kings’.

—nor should any boast of being his equal in battle.' Then Swimon, son of the Chinese king, came out, and all the people gazed upon him. The players of the clarions and tabors came forward and made such a din that the ears of men could hear nothing through it.

They circled round each other at the gallop, shouted and engaged. Swimon, son of the Chinese king, fought very fiercely, and Amiran Darejanisdze found himself unable to vanquish him in any way in which there was no risk of killing him. Swimon, however, did not understand the truth of the matter; nor did he realize how strong Darejanisdze was.

At length Amiran Darejanisdze drew off his horse, then wheeled round and charged, shouting, 'Prince Swimon, beware of me now, for I am coming straight for you! No longer am I going to have scruples about unhorsing you, and more than that, I may even kill you!' He came up at an easy pace, struck the prince's horse with his scimitar and cut off its head—and then before it fell he stretched out his arms, lifted the prince up like a little boy, and said to him, 'Forgive me, Prince Swimon—but you *would* fight with me!' Then King Aspan called out laughing to Prince Swimon, 'My son, did you understand what kind of champion Amiran Darejanisdze was?' After that we separated for the day, and went each to his own tent. Swimon, son of the Chinese king, was galled by what had happened—but what could he do about it?

The next day King Aspan sent a man to Khosro, son of the Khazar king, with this message: 'If it please you, do battle in your turn with Amiran Darejanisdze, and avenge your comrade.' Then Khosro, son of the Khazar king, said to himself, 'Small need was there to bid me do this! By God in Heaven, I will use trickery!'

Once more Amiran Darejanisdze said, 'God knows, never of my own free will shall I fight with those of royal blood, for fear that through some mischance some one of them should meet his death at my hands: it would not be right for such a one to meet his death at the hands of a simple *aznauri*.' Then Khosro said, 'You have no choice—fight we must!' And they determined upon battle for the following day.

Now, any of God's creatures that Khosro, son of the Khazar king, struck with his arrow died on the instant. But when Amiran Darejanisdze sent a man to him with this message: 'What shall we fight with? Shall we use the bow or something else?'—he sent the reply: 'We shall not use the bow.' That night they made ready.

Here is the battle of Amiran Darejanisdze and Khosro,  
son of the Khazar king

When day had broken and the sun had spread forth its light, King Aspan took his seat upon the dais with his queen once more and placed his Star daughters and all the barons round about him. He held a feast, and minstrels sang and tumblers performed. Maidens and youths took their places to watch. Clarioneers and taborers made their music sound, there was much noise, and a crowd beyond counting assembled.

King Aspan sent his attendant to us, Amiran's retainers,<sup>1</sup> with this message: 'By my head, I trust that your lord, Amiran Darejanisdze, will fight with his wonted valour!'<sup>2</sup> Then Amiran Darejanisdze said, 'This man<sup>3</sup> is treacherous—I wonder whether he is preparing some trickery for us?' And when he put on his armour he called for a breastplate which he put on underneath his mail corslet so that it could not be seen.

He came out into the maidan, and Khosro, son of the Khazar king, came forth likewise from the other side. At the outset he did not have his bow with him, but he had instructed his squire thus, 'Keep my bow and an arrow out of sight, and when the moment to join battle comes, pass them over quickly!'

They went out, circled round each other at the gallop—and then suddenly the squire passed the bow and arrow over to Khosro. The son of the Khazar king drew back and loosed [the arrow], and, treacherously and without warning, struck Darejanisdze on the breast. The strength of his armour did not suffice to protect Amiran: the arrow pierced both breastplate and mail and went deeply into his breast.

Bitterly grieved,<sup>4</sup> Amiran Darejanisdze cried out, 'You thought to kill me by treachery, accursed one! That was no deed for a good dchabuki!—Now which way can you turn to escape from my hands alive!' And with that he charged, determined to kill Khosro. Terrified, Khosro, son of the Khazar king, fled. Then I, Savarsamidze, called out, 'Amiran, do not give way to your anger: he cannot stand up to your blows, and you will kill him!'

Heeding these words of his follower's, Amiran threw away his scimitar, and when he overtook Khosro he lifted him from his

<sup>1</sup> Literally, 'to the retainers of our lord'.

<sup>2</sup> Possibly an oblique warning of the likelihood of treachery.

<sup>3</sup> Sc. Khosro.

<sup>4</sup> Or perhaps, 'In great pain'.

saddle and dashed him to the ground, knocking the senses out of him, so that he lay like a corpse—and then said, 'By God in Heaven and the head of my lord Emir Mumli, were you not a prince you would have met your death at my hands by now!' And with that he turned his back on him and went off, leaving Khosro like one lifeless. Then Khosro's retainers went over, picked him up, and took him away.

King Aspan was delighted at Darejanisdze's victory, and was especially pleased that he had spared the son of the Khazar king. We withdrew, and the whole crowd declared that there was no dchabuki like Darejanisdze upon the face of all the earth.

Two<sup>1</sup> days went by: then on the third there was a gathering in Darejanisdze's tent. The princely dchabukis began to discuss and argue about their battles—and then at length Iaman Dchabuki, son of the Yemeni king, reproached Amiran Darejanisdze [for not having given him battle], and challenged him. Then Darejanisdze replied, 'King's son, do not let anyone talk you into doing battle with me: by God in Heaven, it grieves me to do battle with all you princes.' Iaman, however, said to him, 'You have no choice but to fight: the time has come for us to meet in combat!'

King Aspan learned of what had passed and sent this message: 'No more of such talk, Amiran Darejanisdze!—As long as they have not all met you in combat there will be no thought for anything else!' They determined upon battle for the following day, and then we separated.

### Here is the battle of Amiran Darejanisdze and Iaman Dchabuki

When day had broken and the sun had spread the light of its beams over the earth, King Aspan seated himself upon the dais and placed the queen, his Star daughters, and all the barons round about him. He held a feast, and minstrels sang and tumblers performed. The clarioneers and taborers and all the onlookers took their places, and there was gaiety and diversion.

Amiran Darejanisdze went out into the maidan from our side, and Iaman Dchabuki, son of the Yemeni king, came out from the other. They circled round each other at the gallop and fought for a long time. Iaman Dchabuki, son of the Yemeni king, drew off his horse, charged, struck at Amiran Darejanisdze's horse's head with

<sup>1</sup> Literally, 'a few'.

his scimitar, and cut it off. As soon as he had collected his wits, Amiran Darejanisdze jumped up<sup>1</sup> and, on foot now, reached out, seized the two hind legs of [Iaman's] horse, dragged it backwards—then lifted up both horse and man and dashed them to the ground.

King Aspan called out, 'How could you let this happen to you at the hands of a man unhorsed, Iaman Dchabuki?' By your head, we were amazed! After that we separated, as there had already been hard fighting enough for one day.

The next day the princes sent a man to Lasur, son of the Dailami king, and to Amiran Darejanisdze with this message: 'If so please you, dine with us today.' We went—and by your head, such a feast did they spread for us as was a feast indeed! Then presently Lasur, son of the Dailami king, said, 'Amiran Darejanisdze, by God in Heaven, I feel somewhat ashamed to say this to you—but these princes have now all had combat with you, and I must have it also.' Then Amiran replied, 'As I have said already, God knows that I do not relish having battle with princes! Yet I have no choice but to obey your commands.' They determined upon battle for the following day, and then separated.

Here is the battle of Amiran Darejanisdze and Lasur,  
son of the Dailami king

When day had broken and the sun had turned the earth's face to the colour of rubies, King Aspan seated himself upon the dais once more, and placed the queen, his Star daughters, and all the barons round about him. He held a feast, minstrels sang, tumblers performed, and the clarioneers and taborers and all the onlookers took their places.

Lasur, son of the Dailami king, put on his armour and went out. By your head, no mean figure of a man was he! Then Amiran Darejanisdze went out into the maidan from our side. They circled round each other at the gallop, shouted and engaged. They fought on fiercely right through from morning until dusk: then at length Lasur, son of the Dailami king, drew off his horse and cried out, 'King Aspan, witness the doom I am going to bring upon Amiran Darejanisdze!' And by your head, even to us<sup>2</sup> it seemed that there was nothing to choose between them!

<sup>1</sup> Having crashed to the ground with his horse's carcass.

<sup>2</sup> Sc. Amiran's retainers.

Lasur struck Amiran's helmet with his scimitar, and cut very deep. Then Darejanisdze drew off his horse and cried out, 'Lasur, son of the Dailami king, now you are going to feel my rage and the power of my arm—but I shall only throw you down, not kill you!' With that he charged, crashed into Lasur, sent horse and man rolling over on the ground together, killing the horse and knocking the senses out of the rider. So quickly was this done that Lasur had no time to grasp what was happening. King Aspan laughed and said, 'Darejanisdze, you have brought my princely sons-in-law to dishonour!' After that we separated for the day, each going to his own tent.

The next day King Aspan said, 'Darejanisdze, I know that there is no dchabuki like you upon the face of all the earth: but now it is only fair that we should have the aznauris and your retainers do battle together.' And Amiran Darejanisdze replied, 'What you say is just, and your command shall be obeyed.'

Here is the battle of Amiran Darejanisdze's six retainers  
and the six aznauris

When day had broken the king and all the barons came out as usual. Then the six aznauris came out in their armour; and on our side we, the retainers of Amiran Darejanisdze, likewise made ready. Those six were good dchabukis, and the battle lasted until dusk. Well pleased with us were the king and all the people! We fought for a long time—and then at length the king cried out, 'If you retainers of Amiran Darejanisdze's have something of his prowess in you, now is the time for victory!' At this command we began to fight as fiercely as if we were just beginning the battle. Ali Momadisdze said, 'Now for great deeds!' Then we shouted, and hurled those six to the ground. By good fortune not one of them was killed. There was an end to battle for that day, and we went and joined our lord Darejanisdze. Amiran bestowed great gifts and fine raiment upon the princes—and now there was an end to the battles among all those dchabukis.

The next day the kings' sons sent a man to King Aspan with this message: 'Oh King, do not expose your realm to yet further devastation, or have any more of your champions meet their deaths at our hands! Enough of this! No further cause is there for such doings. Give us [four of] your Star daughters to be our wives, and Amiran Darejanisdze [the others] for his lord's sons. Yet, if you

still have some [great] warrior remaining, send him out, and we will do battle with him also.'

The king sent the reply: 'I shall throw open the gates of the city to you, but you will have to get the princesses out for yourselves.' All the dchabukis were well satisfied, and they sent the reply: 'Yes, by Heaven, we will do that.'

Now the seven maidens dwelt in seven towers, with guards at the gates—three thousand picked men for each of the three fairest, and one thousand for each of the other four. And now came the hardest of all the battles!

Here is the dchabukis' capture of the Star maidens, and  
the great battle they had

In the morning the princes armed for battle, and Amiran Darejanisdze accoutred himself for foot-fighting. The princesses' guards also made ready. Amiran Darejanisdze said, 'The princes' followers are disgruntled: we must give the princes some help in their need lest they meet with some mishap.'

And so our lord, while he kept me, Savarsamidze, and Aban Kabanisdze by him, sent to Swimon, son of the Chinese king, Ali Momadisdze; to Khosro, son of the Khazar king, Qamar Qamareli; to the son of the Yemeni king, Kowos Kosidze; and to Lasur, son of the Dailami king, Asan Badridze. He told these retainers of his to stay close to the princes and to give them the best of aid. They went off, and when the kings' sons knew of their coming they were delighted<sup>1</sup> at what our lord had done.

Then the clarions and tabors were sounded, the gates of the city were opened to us, and we charged in. Fierce was the fighting we had that day, for those castle guards were carefully picked men, and the way up into the towers of the Stars was hard indeed. When night fell we had not yet succeeded in storming them, but next day we joined battle again still more fiercely. That day very many—countless—warriors of theirs met their deaths at our hands, and with God's help we triumphed and shattered the gates of the towers. Before the four<sup>2</sup> princes could bring out any of the maidens we had led out the three fairest of the king's Star daughters—those who, I told you, had each three thousand guards. Then the princes brought out the others safely. And then we went before King Aspan.

<sup>1</sup> Reading *iamat'* for *iamant'*.

<sup>2</sup> Reading *ot'khni* for *ot'akhni*.

Rejoicing, the king came to meet us and the Stars and said, 'Blessed are your prowess and your right arms! There are no dchabukis like you upon the face of all the earth!' He accorded us hospitality, and for a short while we rested: too weary were we for anything more that day.

The next was a day of gaiety. King Aspan sat upon his throne and assembled all his barons, together with the townsfolk. He set out purple thrones for the four princes, decked out the palace for feasting, and celebrated such weddings as the tongue of man cannot tell of. He bestowed the Star maidens upon those who had brought them out and furnished dowries of countless treasures, jewels, and pearls. After that the four princes went off, each to his own home. We stayed on and spent many days with King Aspan, for he told us, 'We cannot let you go yet! I shall send you on your way myself when the right time comes.'

Amiran Darejanisdze said to King Aspan, 'Those fine aznauris came to you with a purpose, and they ought not to be sent away empty-handed; for they might bring you aid one day. You ought to have some of your barons give them their daughters in marriage.' Then the king summoned certain of his barons, and gave the aznauris their daughters to wife. After that he bestowed splendid dowries and sent the aznauris away, strong in their devotion to him.

At length Amiran Darejanisdze said, 'Oh King, may you live for ever!—To be with you affords me great happiness, but I have now been here for a long time; and as my lord must be impatient for my coming, it is time, oh King, to grant me leave to go.'

The king replied, 'Yes, by Heaven! Since such is your desire I shall let you go.' Then he had the doors of his treasure-chambers opened and prepared measureless dowries composed of all manner of things: gold, vessels, jewels, pearls, brocades, and hangings. These were loaded on to two thousand camels and one thousand mules. A thousand stallions and a thousand asses did he give as well, with their trappings. Then after he had prepared the dowries he bestowed upon Amiran Darejanisdze gold, jewels, pearls, brocades, raiment, and fabrics, loaded upon a hundred mules. And on all of us retainers as well did he bestow great gifts.

A number of litters studded with jewels and pearls were got ready, and many other fine ones as well. Then at length the king led out his Star daughters, who were followed by countless waiting-women,



ladies-in-waiting beautiful as the moon, handmaids, and attendants, all with golden girdles.<sup>1</sup>

The king and queen summoned Amiran Darejanisdze and confided to his care the Stars, with their countless ladies-in-waiting and attendants, together with these huge dowries. After offering up a prayer to God we set out. The king himself accompanied us for one day's journey, after which we took leave of him. He turned about, his face stained with tears at this parting from his radiant daughters: they too felt sorrow. Then we went off along the road to Baghdad, journeyed on, and presently came before Emir Mumli of Baghdad. We presented the brides for our lord's sons—never have maidens more beautiful been seen by the eye of man! Emir Mumli of Baghdad rejoiced beyond measure, summoned all the barons of his realm, and celebrated weddings such as are not to be described by the tongue of man. Three months did the rejoicings last. Emir Mumli bestowed countless gifts upon Amiran Darejanisdze and upon all of us, his retainers.—Here ends the chapter of the Stars and the deeds of Amiran Darejanisdze. King of Kings, give ear, may you live for ever! Exalted is your rule: may it last for ever, until the end of the ages, Amen.

<sup>1</sup> Golden-girdled attendants figure frequently in our text. Cf. *Shāhnāma* (W), ii, p. 257; iii, pp. 167, 241, 283, &c. Also *Iskandarnāma* (C), pp. 362, 661, 812.

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*The Story of the Talismans<sup>2</sup>*


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King of Kings, give ear: may you live for ever! May God prosper your friends and bring confusion upon those who are false to you! —One morning an attendant, the groom of my lord's chamber, came to me and said, 'Amiran Darejanisdze would have you go to him at once!'

I got up and went, supposing that he had received some piece of news. When I came into my lord's presence I found him sitting upon his bed with his head in his hands and deep in melancholy. Sorely did it grieve me to see him thus!

When I entered he said to me, 'So you have come, Savarsamidze!' And I replied, 'I stand before you.' Then he said, 'Look over there.' I looked, and saw a maiden's face painted upon a piece of vellum fastened to the wall. More beautiful none could be! Amiran asked me if I found her pleasing, and I replied that truly I did. Then he said, 'Sit down, and by Heaven I shall tell you what I know of her.' I brought over a golden chair and seated myself, and then he began.

'Not long since a woman appeared before me while I slept and said, "Amiran Darejanisdze, a man of such prowess as yours should not leave any radiant beauty in the world unseen." Then I woke up and, much astonished, thought to myself, "She must have been an evil spirit—I will not pay her any heed." After that she came at night many times and spoke to me, but still I thought of her in the same way. Then last night she came yet again and said, "Amiran, since you have not listened to me I have painted on the wall the portrait of the maiden of whom I have been speaking to you. Now wake up, and you will see if I have lied in what I have said as to her beauty!" Then I awoke—and there on the wall was the picture.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Eighth' in the text.

<sup>2</sup> See note H, pp. 233-4.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Bahram Gur's falling in love with the portraits of the Seven Beauties, *Haft Paikar* (W), i, pp. 56-57.

"I can tell you nothing more", said the woman;<sup>1</sup> and with that she vanished.'

I asked, 'Did you not seek to find out from her in what land this maiden dwells?' Amiran replied, 'She told me no more than I have you: as she said she knew nothing more I did not question her.'

Oh King, may you live for ever! I was much grieved, and thought to myself, 'There is some devilry here—misfortune has come upon us!' I said, 'If I voice my thoughts it will anger you—yet what else can I do?' Amiran, however, told me to speak my mind, and so I went on, 'I think that this is a wretched business, and that we are going to find ourselves in a wretched plight: I am sure that in the end we shall be quite undone.' Amiran replied, 'No more of such talk, Savarsamidze! In truth I am determined either to find out the road that will lead us to this maiden<sup>2</sup> or to meet my death in seeking it.' I said, 'We know neither where the land is nor what we should find if we got there. Were the case otherwise I should not try to stop you from setting out.' Then Amiran grew melancholy.

Some time after this when we were returning home from exercise in the maidan Amiran said to me, 'Let us ride on farther and enjoy the coolness [of the evening].' Presently, as dusk was falling, we saw on a swift horse<sup>3</sup> a man clad in red with a tall embroidered hat. He came up, made obeisance, and said, 'Amiran Darejanisdze, I know that you have been grieving over this maiden's likeness of which you are now possessed.—Take your way to that part of India where there is a vast plain, and then you will find out your road.'

With that he cracked his whip and vanished: which way he had gone we had no notion! Then Amiran said to me, 'You heard what he said, Savarsamidze?' And I replied, 'I heard—but, by Heaven, he did not tell us which road to take.' To this Amiran retorted, 'You are not eager to go; but there is no help for it—do not try to think of excuses.'

Oh King, may you live for ever! By Heaven, I was sorely grieved! However, I did not give way utterly to gloom.—We went home, and the next day Amiran saw to the business of his hall, his

<sup>1</sup> The apparition momentarily outstays the dream.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, 'the road of this affair'.

<sup>3</sup> (*Rashi*). From Persian *rakhsh*—'lightning'—the name of Rustam's horse in the *Shāhnāma*. Hence any fine or swift horse.

castles, and his cities, set loyal men over them,<sup>1</sup> and gave all needful commands.

Next he summoned me, Savarsamidze, Aban Kabanisdze, and Kowos Kosidze—Ali Momadisdze, Asan Badridze, and Qamar Qamareli were away from home at this time—and said to us, 'Now tell me whether you think we should do better to take a host with us or to go by ourselves.' Aban Kabanisdze replied, 'Amiran Darejanisdze, may you live for ever! If we were going to do what it were best to do we should not set out at all, for the road is full of devilry and evil. However, since we are to set forth, let us not take a host with us, but rather wait for Ali Momadisdze, Asan Badridze, and Qamar Qamareli; or else set out by ourselves.' Then Amiran Darejanisdze laughed and said, 'Any of my retainers who is against setting out at once can take his leave.' Aban went on, 'Let us set out and see what happens upon the road.'

Then we made ready, invoked God's protection,<sup>2</sup> and set out—Amiran Darejanisdze himself and these of his retainers: I, Savarsamidze; Aban Kabanisdze; and Kowos Kosidze. We did not wait for those who were not at home—Ali Momadisdze, Asan Badridze, and Qamar Qamareli—although they would have been the best of men for a quest such as this. And so we journeyed towards the plain of which the man [clad in red] had told us, encountering and slaughtering large numbers of beasts on the way.

As we journeyed on a man appeared on a hill-top and called out, 'Who are you, you horsemen?—A host of brigands lies before you: do not go any farther or they will slaughter you!' Kowos Kosidze said,<sup>3</sup> 'Let me go forward and survey this host.' He went off, and presently encountered<sup>4</sup> five hundred horsemen. By your head, he slaughtered them as if he had been the five hundred and they the one! Amiran Darejanisdze gave him thanks and said, 'You<sup>5</sup> have done a deed such as befits one trained by me!'

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Nibelungen*:

Ê daz si schieden dannen, der künic ze râte gie  
mit sînen hōhsten mannen. unberihtet er niht lie  
lānt ûnde bûrge; die dēr sōlden pflegen,  
den lîez ér ze huote vil manigen ûz erwelten degen.

(p. 327: quatrain 1520a)

<sup>2</sup> In the text this formula is repeated in what corresponds to the next sentence but one in the translation.

<sup>3</sup> *Moakhsene* disregarded.

<sup>4</sup> Reading *shekhvda* for *shekheda*.

<sup>5</sup> Reading *gik'mnies* for *mik'mnies*.

We went on, and presently Aban Kabanisdze said, 'If it please you, I shall go on ahead, to make sure that we are not taken by surprise as we go along.' Amiran replied at once, 'Yes, by Heaven, go!' After Aban had gone forward he met three men. He asked them, 'What has befallen you?'—and they replied, 'Brigands attacked our caravan and slaughtered everyone in it except us, whom they made captive and took away with them. After a time, however, they left us in our bonds on the road.—They are just ahead of you.'

Instead of apprising us of this, Aban Kabanisdze went forward, came up with a thousand men, and slaughtered them so that he brought down the wrath of God upon them.

When we came along in our turn we saw the men in bonds. We questioned them, and they told us the same [story as they had told Aban]. Then we asked them, 'Have you not seen anything of a lone horseman?' And they replied, 'We have indeed seen him, but he went on after the brigands.' Then we went on to bring him aid. Presently we came to a plain where we saw many slaughtered horses and men, but Aban Kabanisdze was not to be seen. Amiran Darejanisdze was grieved and said, 'What a man have we let those base fellows kill!'

A little while after Aban Kabanisdze came up with a lot of prisoners. The only harm he had suffered was one slight wound! Amiran gave him thanks, and then we asked the captives who they were. They replied, 'We were just so many wretched brigands who ganged together.' Then Amiran ordered their release, and they went off. Amiran said to me, 'You and I have had no fighting as yet, while those others have had great battles!' But I replied, 'On this road you have taken we shall not want for such!'

We went on, and presently reached the plain.<sup>1</sup> There was not a living soul upon it, the heat was great, there was neither grass nor water—but we went blindly on. Nowhere could we see any movement of man, bird, or any other creature, and we were very downcast and filled with gloom.

Presently my lord Amiran Darejanisdze—who was out in front while we followed at a little distance—turned round and said to us, 'I can hear the neighing of a horse.' We did not believe this, however, and, spoke hardly of him among ourselves, saying, 'Evil

<sup>1</sup> Sc. that of which the horseman clad in red had told Amiran and Savarsamidze (p. 92).

spirits must have taken possession of him: he cannot know what he is saying. For how could any creature live upon this plain?

We went on—and then presently he said again, 'I do indeed hear the neighing of a horse!' Then we saw a man coming towards us on a dapple-grey. When he had come up close he dismounted, made obeisance to Amiran Darejanisdze, and said, 'Hail, renowned Amiran Darejanisdze! It has been my desire to behold you, and blessed indeed is this place where I have achieved it!'

With that he remounted his horse, made off swiftly, and vanished. Then we began to blame ourselves for letting him get away, and fell into deep gloom. Amiran Darejanisdze only said, however, 'Do not be grieved by his escape, brothers! If he is an enemy he proved himself a coward by making off, and if he was of the demons' kind—well, mere devilry cannot hurt us!' And we made a halt there.

Presently that same man on his dapple-grey and many others, who had turbans trimmed with gold upon their heads and rode dappled mules with yellow trappings, came up, dismounted, made obeisance, and sang our lord's praises, saying, 'We had heard of your great prowess, and wished to behold you—which indeed is like seeing God Himself! To see you is a blessing to us; and blessed also is the might of your right arm!'

Amiran Darejanisdze gave them thanks, and asked them, 'Brothers, who are you, and how do you come to be in this desolate place?' They replied, 'Amiran Darejanisdze, may you live for ever! We are caravaneers, and if you will condescend to come to our camp<sup>1</sup> we shall tell you our story.'

Here is Amiran Darejanisdze's sojourn with the caravaneers; his hearing of their story; his battles, first with the Ashtarabisdzes and then with Tsitlosani<sup>2</sup> Dchabuki, and his vanquishing of all

We set off, escorted by those caravaneers, and came presently to a great valley; and in this, when we looked down, we saw a huge caravan—a bigger there could not be. When<sup>3</sup> we went down among them all the folk came out to meet us, made obeisance to our lord and to all of us his retainers, and sang our praises. Great was their rejoicing! When we arrived at the chiefs' tent gifts of all kinds were

<sup>1</sup> The accepted meanings of *lari* are 'string'; 'silken fabric'; 'treasure'. Its use here to signify 'camp' or 'caravan' appears to be metonymical.

<sup>2</sup> *Cit'losani*: literally, 'clad in red'.

<sup>3</sup> Reading *odes* for *oden*.

brought, and we were lavishly entertained with rare delicacies. Then at length Amiran Darejanisdze called over the chief of the caravan, whose name was Abram, and said to him, 'Who are you, and to whom does this caravan belong?' Then Abram rose and spoke thus:

'Amiran Darejanisdze, may you live for ever! Here is the boon we would crave. Our caravan comes from Basra, and has been to India—for India brings traders much profit—and having done all the business we wished to, we are returning from there.' Then he pointed out one of the men who were by and said, 'That man is a Basran astrologer—and there is no other like him upon the face of all the earth.'

'We remained in India for a long time, for the roads are very dangerous, and fear of brigands kept us from starting out. At length, however, this astrologer looked into his astrolabe and then said, "Do not delay any longer, for now you can go along the road safely and unharmed." We listened to these words and made ready; caravans from other lands joined us, and we left India with these countless treasures.'

'The cause of our lingering here is that three brothers, the Ashtarabisdzes, lion-dchabukis and brigands, have got wind [of our approach] and are on the watch out there for us with three thousand armed warriors. And so it was that we came into this valley—through fear of them. We began to reproach this astrologer, but today he looked into his astrolabe and said, "Brothers, do not be afraid: four Persians are coming this way, and we shall find deliverance at their hands." But we paid him no heed, for we did not believe him. Then after a little he looked into his astrolabe again, rejoiced, and said, "That Baghdad dchabuki who is the lion of lions, Amiran Darejanisdze, will be arriving among us today, and with him he has three of his retainers. It is some other business [that brings him this way], but for all that we shall find deliverance at his hands."

'We rejoiced greatly, and sent off that man on the dapple-grey whom you met first with orders to see if you were coming, and to let us know at once if you did. When he had seen you he came back quickly and told us, whereupon we went out to meet you. You have come as our deliverer and saviour! Now, with God's help, aid us in such fashion as befits your prowess, and we shall reward you with more than has ever been seen by the eye of man.'

Amiran Darejanisdze replied, 'Since God has not withheld His mercy from you, your deliverance<sup>1</sup> rests in His hands: with the aid of God the Creator, I will not suffer you to be harmed by your enemies.' Then they all rose, made him obeisance, and bestowed numberless gifts upon him.

Presently a man rose from among them and said, 'Those brigands out there in front of us, the Ashtarabisdzes, are not so greatly to be dreaded: but Tsitlosani Dchabuki is at hand also, and against him none can stand.'

When he had said this such a wailing broke out in the caravan as if the wrath of God had struck them. So overwhelmed by their fears were they that amid all their wailing they quite forgot the boon they had craved of us.

Kowos Kosidze said, 'I have never heard of the deeds of this Tsitlosani Dchabuki of whom these Basrans stand in such fearful dread.' Amiran Darejanisdze asked, 'Brother Abram, what is it that so afflicts you that all of you are wailing, high and low alike?' Abram replied, 'Tsitlosani Dchabuki is one with whom no man can fight: up to the present time no one has ever been able to stand against him in combat. He thirsts after the blood of every Basran because his little son was killed by one. He has been in feud with us ever since, and kills all, man and woman alike, as soon as he sets eyes on them. Now he has learned of our approach, and is coming to slaughter us. The caravaneers know of his prowess—and then there are the three Ashtarabisdze brothers as well. They stand in dread of all those, and that is why they are wailing.'

When he had heard this Amiran Darejanisdze said, 'You Basrans are no great dchabukis! Indeed, by Heaven, you do not even know anything of such! That is why you rate this Tsitlosani Dchabuki so highly. Now lest you mistake me for some other, I am Amiran Darejanisdze, the Baghdad dchabuki—and now that I have joined you here you need have no further fears. By God in Heaven, I tell you that I am going to see you off to your own land unharmed.'

They all made him obeisance and sang his praises. We remained there that day, and then on the one following, having invoked God's protection, we set out—we, lord and retainers, going in front, and the caravan following.

The three brothers learned [that the caravan was approaching], and came to meet us with a countless host. Presently we perceived

<sup>1</sup> Disregarding *da moindoma*.



them straight in front of us, and then Amiran Darejanisdze said, 'I will engage the three brothers: you take the rest for the nonce.' And with that we all charged fiercely. They too were good dchabukis, and came charging at us at once. Then we engaged—and by Your Majesty's head, before we had each of us [retainers] killed [one warrior], Amiran had slaughtered all three of those Ashtarabisdze brothers! When their three thousand warriors came up we engaged and slaughtered them likewise, so as to bring down the wrath of God upon them. Few were those who escaped us! There was great rejoicing in the caravan, and they said, 'To him who has the aid of Amiran Darejanisdze and his retainers human might can do no harm!' But for all that, fear of Tsitlosani Dchabuki had not been banished from their hearts. We remained there for that day, and the caravaneers bestowed many wondrous gifts upon us.<sup>1</sup>

Now on the battle's being joined,<sup>2</sup> six men in green and six in red, clarioneers and taborers, had appeared and sounded their music. Whenever we had had the upper hand they would sound their clarions and tabors—but they did not come up close to us. When the battle was over they vanished.

Now those Ashtarabisdzes whom we had slaughtered turned out to be the sons of Tsitlosani Dchabuki's sister, and those who had escaped us in the battle went and told him of all that had happened: and they also spoke of the prowess of Amiran Darejanisdze. He sent a man with this message: 'Whether you are in truth Darejanisdze, or merely one who has assumed the name of that wretch, you have chosen to embroil yourself in a deadly business! Yet, although these caravaneers are my blood-enemies, and although for their sake you have slaughtered the three Ashtarabisdze brothers, my sister's sons, and have massacred their host, I will pardon you for all if you will break with this caravan. But if you do not I will kill you along with those in it.'

When Amiran Darejanisdze had heard this he sent back the reply: 'Your sister's sons brought their deaths upon themselves by their own rashness, for it was by their own choice that they came to do battle with me. As for the other matter, it is one that touches

<sup>1</sup> In the text the statement about the caravaneers and the gifts occurs after the immediately following passage on the clarioneers and taborers.

<sup>2</sup> We must read some such word as *daiçqo*, 'began', for *gaiçqara*, 'ended'. The latter probably results from confusion with *gaiçqaris* in the following sentence.

my honour! Fate having brought me across the path of this caravan, I am not going to desert it! If you are a good dchabuki, do me the courtesy of letting it continue on its way.'

When he had received this message Tsitlosani Dchabuki flew into a passion, and he sent off a fierce reply: 'Now that you have addressed me in this fashion you are my blood-enemy! From this day forward I will ever seek your blood: first on my own account and secondly for the sake of my sister's sons.' And they determined upon battle for the following day.

Here is the battle of Amiran Darejanisdze and Tsitlosani  
Dchabuki

When day had broken and the sun had sent forth its bright rays, Tsitlosani Dchabuki came up with a countless host. We on our side also moved forward, leading<sup>1</sup> our host.<sup>2</sup> When we were face to face Tsitlosani Dchabuki sent a man to Amiran Darejanisdze [with a message calling on him] to desert the caravan, but Amiran gave no heed. Then we caught sight of Tsitlosani Dchabuki on horseback: had you seen him you would have said that there could be no finer man! Terror struck the caravan as soon as they had seen him, and they began with endless wailing and lamentation.

The whole of Tsitlosani Dchabuki's host was clad in red, and all the tents they had pitched were red likewise.—The dchabuki's bodyguard came out after him fully accoutred: on our side Darejanisdze moved forward, after invoking God's protection, followed by us, his retainers. We could have used the caravan as a host, but that day all the fighting was done by us four.

Had you seen those two illustrious and valiant dchabukis, you would have said, 'A better match has never been seen upon the face of all the earth!'—They circled round each other at the gallop, shouted, charged, and engaged. Fearful was their combat: they clashed together like two mountains, and the noise of blows falling upon armour was like the thunder in the heavens.

Shouts rose from both [Tsitlosani Dchabuki's] host and from the caravan in our rear, in a tumult<sup>3</sup> so tremendous that no one could hear anything else. The battle lasted long: we could not see that either was gaining the upper hand. Then at length Amiran Darejanisdze drew off his horse, shouted, 'Now behold my prowess and

<sup>1</sup> Reading *sheviqvanet* for *shevigenet*.

<sup>2</sup> Sc. the caravaneers.

<sup>3</sup> Reading *zrinva* for *zrunva*.

the power of my arm!"—charged, and then while still at a distance raised his scimitar to strike. Stricken with fear, Tsitlosani Dchabuki merely sought to ward off the blow with his own scimitar. Darejanisdze struck this, shattered it, cleft Tsitlosani through his helmet down to his throat,<sup>1</sup> and killed him instantly. Then Tsitlosani Dchabuki's bodyguard came up, made obeisance, sang the praises of Amiran Darejanisdze, and said to him, 'Since we can serve our lord no longer, now that he has met his death at your hands, we are your men.' Amiran Darejanisdze replied, 'Brothers, I am not going to do you any harm: nor indeed did I desire the death of Tsitlosani Dchabuki, although through an ill chance it has come about. Now, if you wish, you can stay with me: or if not—you are free. Do as you choose.' Then they made him obeisance and went off home.

Now those wondrous clarioneers and taborers reappeared,<sup>2</sup> sounded their clarions and tabors, sang my lord's praises; then made obeisance and vanished. In the caravan there was great rejoicing: they sang the praises of Amiran Darejanisdze and said, 'Blessed are your right arm and your prowess: upon the face of all the earth there is no dchabuki like you!' And they bestowed upon him gifts beyond counting.

We encamped for the night: presently Abram, the leader of the caravan, said to Amiran Darejanisdze, 'You have given us such aid as befitted your valour! Now I would ask you where you are going and why you are journeying over this desolate plain?' Amiran Darejanisdze laughed and replied, 'Brother Abram, busy your thoughts with trade<sup>3</sup>—why should you concern yourself with this matter?' Abram replied, 'My lord, I may perhaps know something of the road you are taking.' Amiran Darejanisdze rejoiced to hear this and said to himself, 'Maybe he does indeed know something about it: we will tell him our business.'

When Amiran had told him everything Abram said, 'I have a servant who knows this road'—and made him over to Amiran there and then. Amiran Darejanisdze asked this servant of Abram's, 'Brother, do you indeed know this road?' And he replied, 'My Lord, I do: I shall take you as far as my knowledge goes—but then

<sup>1</sup> Reading *qiamdis* for *qimdi*.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 98.

<sup>3</sup> The aristocratic contempt of the dchabuki for the merchant underlying this sally may be compared with that present in Avt'andil's taunt, 'You merchants are cowards and know nothing about battle!' R 1019.

you must not force me to go any farther.' We rejoiced greatly at his words.

King of Kings, give ear!—We set out, taking with us this servant of Abram's: presently, however, Abram himself overtook us and presented [Amiran] with four lengths of a purple fabric and four pearls, saying, 'Perhaps these may be of help to you there where, strong in God's blessing, you are going.' Amiran gave him thanks, and then Abram turned about.

We went on, and presently arrived at the building which you have seen:<sup>1</sup> and when we looked inside it we saw an inscription and just such a maiden's likeness as that which had been put on the wall [of Amiran's chamber].<sup>2</sup> Amiran Darejanisdze looked at it and then drew out that one from his bosom. Had you seen the two of them together you would have declared that they were assuredly of the same maiden. Above was the inscription, 'This is the likeness of Lady Khuvareshan.'<sup>3</sup> Much amazed were we.

After that we asked our guide how much of the road he knew, and he replied, 'Ahead of us there stands a great rock, and inside it in a cave there is a talisman fashioned as a copper-man.<sup>4</sup> A road—there is no other—passes underneath. Any man who goes along under is sure to meet his end, for there is no way of killing this copper-man or of doing battle with him. There are many other talismans on the road, but I can tell you no more—I have already told you all I know.'

King of Kings, give ear!—We set out, and presently came up to the rock and the talisman, which we could see inside a large cave. The guide said, 'If you think it a good plan—drive this camel of mine on ahead and see what<sup>5</sup> he does to it.'

We took his advice, and drove the camel forward. As it came up the copper-man struck it on the back with the scimitar he had in his hand, and cut it clean through.<sup>6</sup> After that he turned about and

<sup>1</sup> Sc. the building found by the Indian King, to whom Savarsamidze is telling the tales of Amiran, after his pursuit of the antelope. See pp. 2-3.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 91.

<sup>3</sup> *Khuvareshan*.

<sup>4</sup> On men of copper and other metals, see J. D. Bruce, 'Human Automata in Tradition and Romance', *Modern Philology*, x, pp. 511-26. The author considers (p. 525) that the idea came to Europe from the East.

<sup>5</sup> Reading *raca* for *saca*.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. the story of the Russian princess, *Haft Paikar* (W), p. 174: 'Upon the road to that high-towering fort she set with cunning skill some talismans. Each talisman a form of iron and stone; each bearing in its hand a glittering [sword].

went back into his cave. Amazed and terror-stricken were we [retainers]!

Amiran Darejanisdze said to us, 'Well, you can engage this copper-man—or are you going to tell me that you are not such as I?' To this Kowos Kosidze replied, 'Even if we were in the habit of killing ten thousand men every day we would not claim to be such as you! But no more: this is your battle—set about it in whatever way you think best!' Amiran Darejanisdze laughed and said, 'You good-for-nothings! If you found yourselves in really sore straits, is this all that you would have to say?—But now, tell me, what are we to do?' Kowos Kosidze said, 'If you listen to me, we will turn about!' But he was only joking. Then I, Savarsamidze, said [to Amiran], 'As it is your battle, do as you will.'

King of Kings, give ear: may you live for ever!—Amiran mounted, put aside his scimitar, took a club in his hand, and then drove another camel forward, himself following closely behind. When it had reached the same spot, the copper-man came out, struck it with his scimitar, cleft it through, and then turned about. At that Amiran Darejanisdze charged, struck him with his club, and shattered him to dust<sup>1</sup> in an instant. Then those same clarioneers and taborers appeared, sounded their clarions and tabors, sang our lord's praises—and then vanished:

We entered the cave and there saw a fine-looking dchabuki painted upon the rock, with this inscription above:

After a great battle in which I, Bakajar<sup>2</sup> the Valiant,<sup>3</sup> alone and unaided carried off a certain maiden, my astrologer fashioned this talisman so that no other warrior should ever be able to carry her off by any means.

Then, as we looked around, we found another portrait, of an old man, with this inscription above it:

I am the astrologer Jamsar, the fashioner of this talisman. Should any good dchabuki, be he who he may, get as far as this—and unless he is a mighty lion indeed he will not

[So that] whoever reached that dangerous pass, by the sword's strokes [at once] was cut in two.'

<sup>1</sup> Literally, 'shattered him like meal'.

<sup>2</sup> *Bak'ajar*.

<sup>3</sup> *K'veli* has a wide range of significance, including such concepts as 'good'; 'valiant'; 'merciful'; 'generous'.

have succeeded in that, for first he will have had a hard journey over the plain—let him, even though he has contrived to win this far and to vanquish the talisman, seek to go no farther; for should he try to, he will fail and meet his end.

We halted for a few days, and then our guide left us and went back. [On the following morning] when day had broken we too set out. We journeyed on throughout that day, then on the following we heard the roaring of a lion. At first we could see nothing, but when we had got closer we saw that it was a copper-lion which was doing the roaring. When it saw us it began to make yet more noise, and then came at us, together with many other lions—beyond counting they were. We slaughtered [many], but still they came on endlessly. At length Kowos Kosidze charged the copper-lion [which had been roaring], struck and shattered it—and as soon as he had destroyed it the lions ceased to come on in their multitudes.

During the battle those same clarioneers and taborers had appeared once more: now they sounded their clarions and tabors to celebrate the shattering of the lion, and then vanished. Amiran Darejanisdze said, 'By God in Heaven, you have excelled us all, Kowos Kosidze!' And then we halted for the day.

The next morning we went on: presently on this hand and on that rocks rose up that were so tremendous that the eye could not take in their hugeness. A road ran through them, and on this there was a talisman. We took this road, though we could see nothing on it save this talisman. On we went, not knowing where we might be going. Then presently we saw a structure<sup>1</sup> on the road that was fashioned out of copper into steps, like a flight of stairs. On top of this there stood a copper-man<sup>2</sup>—never have I seen a man so huge! Beside him stood another man, also of copper, with a clarion in his hands,<sup>3</sup> which he began to sound as soon as he saw us. A countless host came forth: we engaged them and there was a great battle—never has such fierce fighting been seen! Ceaselessly

<sup>1</sup> This rendering of *kalo*, the usual meaning of which is 'threshing-floor', is dictated by the context.

<sup>2</sup> Presumably the talisman already described.

<sup>3</sup> There seems to be some association between men of copper or other metal and instruments of the trumpet or horn kind: cf. the trumpeter in the tale *Jaudar* in the *Arabian Nights*; the black figure with the horn in the German romance *Diu Crône*, by Heinrich von dem Türlin (ed. G. H. F. Scholl, Stuttgart, 1852, p. 86); and the men with horns on the ramparts of the Castle of Great Endeavour in the *High History of the Holy Graal* (transl. by S. Evans, London, 1910, p. 206).

this fearful host came on—but they fought with us only because the huge [copper-]man kept shouting in a loud voice, and the clarioneer sounding his clarion. The stream of warriors never slackened, but for all their numbers they could not put us to rout. And so the battle went on: most of the warriors joined with Amiran Darejanisdze, while [the rest] engaged us three severally. We grew wearied with the fighting, and our strength began to fail, and we were all but overcome. Those clarioneers and taborers of ours appeared, and began to sound their music on our side, while on the other the [second] copper-man continued to sound his clarion. The countless host still poured forth, wave upon wave. And there was no one to help us.

At length Aban Kabanisdze gave a shout, charged up to the copper structure, and, leaving his horse at the foot, climbed up and struck the copper-man's shield with his club. But the [copper-]man struck him and sent him rolling down.

Then Kowos Kosidze shouted, 'Now, Aban Kabanisdze, watch me!'—and with that he charged, and, leaving his horse at the foot [of the structure], climbed up and struck the copper-man's shield with his club. Then the [copper-]man struck him and sent him rolling down in his turn.

After that Amiran Darejanisdze shouted to me, 'Now you go, Savarsamidze!' I went forward and, leaving my horse at the foot [of the structure], began to climb up. The copper-man came down to meet me and struck me. I struck him—and then he struck me again and sent me rolling to the bottom. I wanted to climb up once more, but was too faint.

Then Amiran Darejanisdze shouted, 'Now you will see the strength of my arm!'—dismounted, gripped his club, and went charging up [the steps]. The [copper-]man came down to meet him and struck him. Amiran struck him in turn, and after that they both went up [on to the top of the structure]. By Your Majesty's head, never have I seen such a fierce battle!

All this time the [second] copper-man went on sounding his clarion, their host continued to pour forth inexhaustibly—and the battle pressed very heavily upon us. At last, however, Kowos Kosidze shouted, 'What are you about, Darejanisdze? Now is the time for deeds! This multitude of warriors press very heavily with their attacks<sup>1</sup> upon us!' Then Amiran Darejanisdze shouted back,

<sup>1</sup> Reading *jikman* for *jivman*.

'Watch me, Kowos Kosidze!'—braced his legs together, took his club in both hands, and shattered that copper-man in an instant. As soon as he was thus shattered the clarioneer fell down too, the ever-oncoming warriors disappeared, and those whom we had slaughtered vanished as well.

Then those wondrous clarioneers and taborers, the six in green and the six in red, appeared, sounded their clarions and tabors, and sang the praises of Amiran Darejanisdze, saying, 'We had heard your prowess praised, but no one told us of such feats as these we have ourselves seen you perform! Blessed and glorified is God, since He has granted it to us to behold you! And now there are no further perils on the road.' And with that they vanished.

We made a halt for that day. Amiran Darejanisdze said to us, 'Never have I seen such tremendous or such fierce battles: never has such fighting come my way before!'

The following morning when day had broken we went on. Then presently we saw a countless host of warriors, one part clad in green on the one hand and the rest clad in red on the other. [Its leaders] came up, made obeisance, and sang the praises of Amiran Darejanisdze, saying, 'Hail, King of this land, you who by the force of your prowess have won for yourself the whole earth! No one has ever so much as thought of coming over this road, nor—its own rulers<sup>2</sup> aside—has any alien<sup>3</sup> ever trampled this land under foot save only one, Bakajar the Valiant: and even he did not perform such great deeds.' And they bestowed great gifts upon Amiran.

The army came forward to greet us;<sup>4</sup> first those in red and then those in green. All of those in green were the queen's men, while those in red were Lady Khuareshan's. They sang the praises of our lord Amiran Darejanisdze and bestowed precious gifts upon him. After that clarioneers, taborers, tumblers, and sweet-voiced minstrels came forward.

The raiment of this army led us to ask why half was in red and half in green, the older men in green and the youths in red. One of the barons told us, 'In this kingdom only two of the royal house survive—the queen and her daughter, Lady Khuareshan; she who

<sup>1</sup> Oriental hyperbole.

<sup>2</sup> In modern Georgian *memamule* signifies 'landowner'.

<sup>3</sup> Presumably we are to understand that the reigning dynasty was of foreign origin.

<sup>4</sup> The words *cavedit' munit'*—'we went on'—at the beginning of this sentence appear to be out of place.



is to be your lord's wife. There is no other ruler in the land. Ostras, the father of Lady Khuareshan, was a great king, but death has now reft him from the joys of this world, and he has no other heir than those [two]. Now, by the will of God, the whole of this realm falls to your lord. If I may presume to say so, the splendours of this land cannot be described by the tongue of man! You will see great cities, and royal palaces, wondrously built: those built with red-green stones<sup>1</sup> belong to the queen, those with red only are Lady Khuareshan's. But why should I praise them to you when you will see them with your own eyes?

We went on: presently we saw a woman with two children coming towards us. Two lions appeared, and one seized one child and one the other, while the woman shrieked and wept. Amiran Darejanisdze saw what had happened and charged the lions—and they, when they saw him bearing down on them fiercely, dropped the boys and came charging at him. Amiran Darejanisdze seized one with one hand and one with the other and dashed their heads together, so that the brains ran down over his arms.—This was done in the sight of all, and someone said, 'By Heaven, our lady's daughter is going to have a good husband!'

On we went. We had thought that all the people of the realm must already have come to meet us; but they had not, for as we journeyed on burgesses came out of cities and castles that amazed us with their magnificence, made obeisance to our lord, and bestowed great gifts upon him. For twenty more days we went on through other provinces, all much like the first, and during this journey there were no bounds to the welcomes or to the gifts or to the entertainment we received.

When we drew near to the great city which was the capital of the realm and in which dwelt the queen and that fairest of the fair, that light of the rising sun, her daughter Lady Khuareshan, a great multitude, with countless barons—never have I seen men so richly apparelled or so fine to look upon!—came out a day's journey, dismounted, made obeisance, and sang the praises of Amiran Darejanisdze. Those in red and those in green, the aged, the fair maids and the young lads—all did the same. It was a sight so wondrous, and with such excitement in the throng, as cannot be told of by the tongue of man.

Amiran Darejanisdze said to Kowos Kosidze, 'Is not this better

<sup>1</sup> Cf. R 1090.

than we should have had by turning about, as you wanted me to do?' To this Kowos replied, 'We might well have turned about *then*—but, by Heaven, not now!'

We arrived in the city and crowds of people came out to meet us. It seemed to us that not a twentieth of these numbers had ever come out to meet us before. We found the city to be beautiful and of great size—never has one so large been seen by the eye of man! The walls and all the buildings were built of red-green stone in such a fashion that their splendour cannot be told of by the tongue of man. So huge was the city that although we entered it at day-break we had scarcely reached the royal palace at its centre by midday. [Here in the group of palace buildings] we saw royal halls, large and splendid residences, and other fine edifices besides. All were surrounded by thick and high walls. The palace<sup>1</sup> was built of green [stone], richly adorned. The gates were fashioned from this same green stone: they looked to us as though they had been wrought each from a single emerald.

At the palace gates two thousand barons stood on guard, clad in heavy brocade of gold,<sup>2</sup> with turbans made out of cloth of gold, and with golden girdles. They made obeisance to Amiran Darejanisdze and sang his praises. Then we passed through the palace gateway and went inside. Amiran Darejanisdze went on into a hall lined with gold in which there stood a canopy adorned with jewels and pearls and green emeralds. Here stood the royal thrones, and round about was cloth of gold that shone like the sun. The queen's chamberlains, ladies-in-waiting, and attendants—all richly clad in cloth of gold, and with turbans, mantles, and golden girdles round their waists—came forward, made obeisance, and then stood with their hands folded upon their breasts. Amiran Darejanisdze went in below the canopy, and we seated ourselves upon chairs of gold which were brought forward for us.

When he went in<sup>3</sup> the doors of the hall were opened, and a radiance like the sun's poured through. We thought that such a light must surely come from Lady Khuareshan—but no. The light came from two jewels, one purple and one white, lying upon two golden trays.

Then, after a large number of ladies had come through the opened doors, the queen, the mother of that star Lady Khuareshan,

<sup>1</sup> Reading the variant *darbazi* in place of *k'visani*.

<sup>2</sup> (*Sakarmangi*): doubtless to be connected with Samarcand.

<sup>3</sup> Reading *kubosa* . . . *gavida* for *sakhlisa* . . . *gamovida*.

made her entry by herself, clad in green and gold brocade. Never have I seen a lady of such beauty, for all that she was no longer young.

Amiran Darejanisdze rose, they saluted each other and exchanged greetings. Then the queen said, 'Blessed is the merciful God, since He has given it to me to look upon you with my own eyes as the betrothed of my radiant daughter and as my destined son-in-law. And you too may well rejoice, for never has any man enjoyed such good fortune as you! First God destined this land for you, and now your own prowess has placed it in your hands!'

Amiran Darejanisdze made acknowledgement, and they sat down on those splendid thrones. Two magnificent garments were brought, one green and one white, adorned with jewels and pearls—none could tell their worth! They arrayed Amiran Darejanisdze in these two garments, and us in splendid ones likewise.—The queen stayed for a short while, and then she said, 'You must be battle-worn and weary: take your ease and call for viands.' After that she went away.

That day we received such entertainment as was worthy of such a great queen.<sup>1</sup> Many days did we pass there, with all manner of rejoicings. Meanwhile the queen sent out a writ of summons to her whole realm.

'Amiran Darejanisdze, a very lion-dchabuki, has arrived here, having by the force of his prowess won his way along a tremendous road that hitherto none among the sons of men has managed to come over. No one has ever done such things as he! And now he has arrived at our royal palace. Now come, do homage, and look upon him who is to be my son-in-law and will be king of our land. My daughter, beauteous as the moon, will not consent to marry him at my behest alone: you too must approve, and call upon her<sup>2</sup> to do so. If you think it well to have him for your king, I shall marry my daughter to him: if not—then find me a dchabuki better than he, and him will I make [king]. I am a woman, and furthermore I am nearing the end of my days in this fleeting world, for old age is coming upon me, and I no longer have the strength to rule. Nor can I leave that sun of suns my daughter behind me husbandless.'

All obeyed, and the barons both greater and lesser of her dominions assembled and offered homage to Amiran Darejanisdze. They

<sup>1</sup> Literally, 'as befitted their [her] position'.

<sup>2</sup> Reading *açvriot* for *maçvriot*'.

did homage to him and presented him with many gifts; and all said with one voice, 'May you live for ever, with length of days, King of Kings!'

Then the barons of her land said to the queen, 'Nowhere have we seen, nor have we ever heard tell of such a man! Of late this realm, which ever since it came into being has enjoyed good fortune, had lost all hope: but now God has sent us, grieving in our kinglessness, such a king as has never been seen upon the face of all the earth! Oh Queen, he is indeed worthy to be king over us, and we will all obey him and submit to his commands.' At these words the queen rejoiced and offered up boundless thanks to God. Then they determined to celebrate the wedding upon the following day, and began to make preparation.

Here is the wedding of Amiran Darejanisdze and that  
star Lady Khuareshan

When the light of morning shone forth the celebration of the wedding began in the royal palace. As yet we had not seen that star of the morning Lady Khuareshan, but now they brought her in—and by Your Majesty's head, the eye of man has never seen any like her! They married those two, bride and bridegroom, placed priceless crowns upon their heads, hailed Amiran Darejanisdze as king, set him upon a shining throne, and sang his praises. A countless multitude was there—never have I seen such finery, on the greater and lesser barons alike. All gave themselves over to boundless rejoicing.

When we arrived they took us into a second hall, in which a banquet had been spread. This hall made the first seem like a wooden hut! In it there were two canopies, one of reddish purple and one green. They told us that the purple substance inside the canopy was jacinth. The canopy was adorned with pearls. Inside this canopy stood a throne covered with cloth of gold—a rich fabric, as it seemed. The second canopy was fashioned of green emeralds and adorned with pearls. The throne within it was covered with green, emerald-like cloth of gold. Seats<sup>1</sup> of gold were placed for the barons.<sup>2</sup>

Amiran Darejanisdze and Lady Khuareshan, both clad in purple

<sup>1</sup> *Sajdomi ok'rosa selebi*: literally, 'chair[s] and seats of gold'. *Seli* (Latin *sella*) properly means a folding seat, but here may well merely duplicate *sajdomi*.

<sup>2</sup> This passage is very obscure.

and cloth of gold, sat down to dine within the purple canopy. Had you seen them, you would have said, 'No bridegroom and bride could compare with these!' On the other, green throne the queen sat, somewhat apart. At the royal tables all the goblets and bowls used were fashioned from precious stones: some of the goblets were of purple jacinth, some were of green emerald, some were of yellow jacinth,<sup>1</sup> and some were of ruby of Badakhshan.<sup>2</sup> Why go on?—We were amazed at the multitude of fine things. At the aznauris' table all the bowls were of gold and the goblets of Baghdad crystal. And such diversion was there as we had never known.

Through a door giving entry from another hall in the palace came an old woman in a beautiful dress who brought with her a maiden attired, like her, in green and purple. They bore between them a green garment which was lined with purple and adorned with flashing jewels and pearls. Three jewels were there on it, two on the shoulders and one on the breast, and they shone as brightly as the rays of the sun.

Another door was opened, and in came attendants bearing a crown of yellow jacinths which gleamed so as to outshine the rays of the sun. The jewels in the crown outshone those on the dress as if they had been mere common stones. They arrayed the king<sup>3</sup> in this garment and placed the crown upon his head. Then they arrayed Lady Khuareshan in a garment adorned with jewels and pearls, and placed a crown made out of a single jacinth<sup>4</sup> [upon her head]. After that the queen arrayed herself in a fashion such as befitted her beauty.

Officers of the treasury came in with garments for the barons, and then again they brought costly raiment for us. Greater delight there could not have been. Three times did they bring in costly raiment for the king and queen,<sup>5</sup> and by your head, [that which they brought in] last was the finest of all!

At length the royal banquet came to an end: then, after some little time had passed we were invited to another feast [in another hall. In this palace] no hall or throne was like any other! And by your head, during the first<sup>6</sup> banquet they brought in the finest of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. R 1527.

<sup>2</sup> A province of northern Afghanistan, bordering on the present-day Tadzhik Soviet Republic.

<sup>3</sup> Sc. Amiran.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. R 1414.

<sup>5</sup> Sc. (in this instance) Khuareshan.

<sup>6</sup> Taking the text as it stands, we must suppose this feast to be reckoned the first of a new series: but there is probably some confusion.

everything, and countless presents were given to the barons, both greater and lesser. Once more did they clothe us in fresh raiment, and six times over did they bestow gifts upon each of us. But as for [the quantity of] raiment given to the king and queen,<sup>1</sup> do not ask me [to tell of that]!

Minstrels sang, and tumblers performed such tricks as have never been seen. The feast was held in a small hall lined with gold and studded with jewels and pearls: the walls were adorned with precious stones, and the floor was gilt. When they had made an end of feasting the queen said to Amiran Darejanisdze, 'Give orders for a feast in that [other] hall<sup>2</sup> [through there], and take the barons through with you.' Amiran gave his orders, and we passed through. By your head, that hall was by far the finest of them all! We felt sure that none could excel it.

The queen said, 'There is no merit in secrecy.' What could the barons say to this?—On the pulling-down of a lever a gold panel in the wall opened outwards, and we beheld [through the wall] a number of barons, each with a golden beaker standing in front of him.<sup>3</sup> Great was our astonishment! Then, after they had given us most beautiful presents of divers kinds, we put an end to the feast and separated.

We spent ten days over the wedding [celebrations], and with each the feasting and the bestowal of gifts grew more magnificent. The queen gave lavishly to Amiran Darejanisdze: at length she said, 'I am going to withhold nothing from you'<sup>4</sup>—summoned the officers of the treasury, and had them bring the keys of sixty vaults. Then she said, 'I am going to make over all my store of treasure to you.' Amiran Darejanisdze gave her thanks, and we went and looked at them—by your head, never have I seen such a wealth of fine and beautiful things!<sup>5</sup>

Then the queen said, 'Now, if you so please, go out to hunt.' Up till then we had been thinking, 'There can be no thought of

<sup>1</sup> Sc. (in this instance) Khuareshan.

<sup>2</sup> Reading *sakhlt'a* for *sapolt'a*: there is probably some confusion in the description of this 'double feast'.

<sup>3</sup> This incident is very obscure.

<sup>4</sup> Literally, 'I have nothing more to give you'. *Shekadreba* is used here in its 'polite' sense of 'say to': hence, 'offer'.

<sup>5</sup> In his *The Symbolism of Colours in . . . 'The Knight in the Tiger's Skin'*, Buenos Aires, 1953 (in Georgian), p. 43, Nosadze cites this passage in support of his contention that the familiar word *turp'a* ('beautiful') originally signified 'rich fabric'.

hunting so long as ladies are of our company.’<sup>1</sup>—When we went out, men with leopards and falconers had already appeared, bringing with them sixty leopards, sixty white hawks, a hundred falcons, as many setters, and countless other creatures of the chase. We went out and hunted—never have I seen such a land for game! Presently, well content, we came back in, and a banquet was spread.

During the feast the queen said, ‘Amiran Darejanisdze, can it be that your radiant one—my daughter—holds something against me? Well, whether or not you have found good entertainment here, it behoves you to give me thanks!’<sup>2</sup> Then the radiant Lady Khuareshan said to me, ‘Savarsamidze, do you hear what the queen is saying? She must be finding our presence here irksome indeed to speak thus—so now we have no choice but to leave. Well, let us go to my own capital.’ And Amiran Darejanisdze replied, ‘Well, if we are to go, let us go!’

The queen said, ‘I am an old woman, and have not the strength to go with you. But you [two] are young—may God spare you to reign a thousand years: go and be happy.’ They replied, ‘It would not be seemly for us to go unless you come with us.’ And in the end she came.

After a day’s journey we passed beyond the queen’s borders and entered the appanage of Lady Khuareshan. By Your Majesty’s head, each city there was more splendid than the last! There were castles built of red stone, with magnificent walls, and marvellous palaces [of great size], together with smaller ones, one after another, and all beautiful. But do not wonder at the use of red stone for building—the land was rich in it.

After ten more days of travel we reached the capital city, and all the townsfolk came out to meet us, made obeisance, and sang our praises. Much did we marvel at the riches of the land and of its people.

We entered, and beheld a city the like of which we had never seen; and there and then we forgot all about the splendours of the queen’s capital—although we noticed among the larger palaces one much like hers.

After we had entered on [the approaches to] the royal palace we

<sup>1</sup> This interpretation of *dedani arian da sanadiro ara ut’k’s* is no more than speculative.

<sup>2</sup> The purpose of this banter is presumably to give Khuareshan an opening for the suggestion which she proceeds to make.

came on to a way flagged with stones of reddish-purple, which had walls on either side running right up to the palace. Upon these were clarioneers and taborers, who sounded their clarions and tabors, while the voices of minstrels<sup>1</sup> fell sweetly upon the ear. This road was called the Kings' Way.—We passed along it and came up to another wall of purple stone and the large and splendid purple gates of the palace.

When these gates were opened we saw inside all the many barons [of Khuareshan's appanage], clad in cloth of gold and with on their heads rich turbans of the same stuff, which much became them. They came out to meet us, sang our praises, made obeisance, and invited him who was our lord and their king [to come in].

After we had entered the splendid palace the queen and her daughter withdrew to inner chambers, and we took our rest in the richly-adorned hall. By your head, it made us quite forget the magnificence and gorgeous furnishings of all the others we had already seen! We could not make out how it had been built, but this much I do know: its walls were purple and its ceiling was white, and a radiance like the light of the sun shone down from above. We wondered whether there might be some other hall yet finer, some of us saying that they would not have brought us straight away to the most magnificent. Kowos Kosidze, however, declared, 'By your heads, unless they lift us up to Heaven [we shall not see any more magnificent—for] there can be none finer upon earth!'

The chief officers of the treasury came, bringing fine raiment, a crown, and gifts for the king—and for us too presents beyond counting. We were amazed at such wealth and grandeur! The king donned a purple garment in which flashing jewels and huge pearls had been worked into cloth of gold, and then placed the crown, the like of which no one has ever seen, upon his head.

Chamberlains came and summoned us to a feast: we went into the hall where the banquet was spread—never have I seen one so vast or so splendid! Here too there were purple canopies, green thrones, chambers of marvellous construction, and gleaming columns all studded with jewels and pearls, at the tops of which there was a fire-like glow which might have made you think that there could be no need of lights there at night. As for the walls, they were lined with gold. Girls<sup>2</sup> sang, but although we could hear

<sup>1</sup> Reading *mgosant'a* for *moshait'i'a*, 'tumblers'.

<sup>2</sup> The formula 'minstrels sang and tumblers performed' stands here in the



their voices as clearly as if they were sitting beside us we could not see them; for they were in fact outside.—For the barons a hundred chairs, again of gold [had been set out].

We sat down to the banquet. No vessels were used save only bowls and goblets fashioned from jewels. Great was the gaiety. Officers of the treasury brought out raiment and gifts for all—and by your head<sup>1</sup> the raiment fetched out last, alike for the king and for the barons, was the finest of all! During the banquet ten robes and ten crowns, moreover, were brought forth, five for each of the queens. Then at length the feasting came to an end for that day.

[? The next day] they spread<sup>1</sup> a banquet in the same hall: they brought still more goblets, tumblers came in, and they continued with their feasting. Raiment was brought out, and they robed the king and all the barons. Lady Khuareshan bestowed countless gifts upon the king, and they robed all of us as well, and gave us many presents. And afterwards we separated.

The next day we went to feast in another hall. Once again there were two canopies, and the walls were as white as snow. Minstrels stood in a circle within and sang, and we sat down to a feast. In front of the king stood a goblet and a wine-jar, both of red jacinth, and before each of us was a goblet of gold. There was great gaiety, and we drank the ruby-coloured wine.

So sweet was the singing of the minstrels that we were fain to have those who sang so beautifully come closer. The king laughed at this, however, and said to me, 'If they please you so much, get up and bring them over here.' I rose, went over, and tried to put out my hand to touch them—but it struck against some barrier,<sup>2</sup> and it was borne in on me that there must be something in between them and us.<sup>3</sup> Amazed, thunderstruck, we said, 'There is something devilish here!' But it was not so: [it was merely that] the stone was so transparent that they appeared as in a mirror. Much did we marvel at this!—We diverted ourselves, and then separated for the day.

On the third day they took us to feast in yet another hall, of less size, built of camphor—not pure, but blended with other substances. It was gilt all over and adorned with jewels and pearls; text, obviously out of place: at the end of the sentence the singers are referred to as *nutribni* ['singing-girls'].

<sup>1</sup> The sense of *mohkides* is uncertain: perhaps it should be rendered, 'they partook of . . .'.  
<sup>2</sup> Literally, 'struck upon a wall'.

<sup>3</sup> Literally, 'realized that they were on the far side of a wall'.

and from it sweet perfumes were wafted to our nostrils. Inside there were two canopies, also of camphor. This was a summer palace for the pleasure of Lady Khuareshan.

Girls sang, there was boundless gaiety, and we were clothed in fine raiment. They did not put an end to the feasting at nightfall but brought four lamps, two purple and two white. The four corners were lit up with these. We took them to be candles of dyed wax, but they did not burn away as time passed. We were astonished at this, and did not know what to make of it. Some of us said one thing, and some another, till at length Aban Kabanisdze got up and said, 'There is no need to argue—I will go and look at them.' When he had gone over he saw that two of them had two purple jacinths and the other two emeralds set in their bases, and that what was shining above in all four were stones of yellow jacinth: and they all shone like candles. We marvelled at this more than at anything else! And after that we separated.

On the fourth day they summoned us to feast in yet another hall. It was small, built of cypress-wood, and adorned with jewels and pearls. There were two canopied thrones, also of cypress-wood. This was Lady Khuareshan's winter palace. We sat down and feasted, and then they bestowed upon Amiran more than had ever been given on any day before. After that we separated.

The king ordered a hunt, and we went out. Nowhere can there be such a land for game! We enjoyed good sport the whole day. We were found with a hundred leopards, a hundred white hawks, and countless other things proper to the chase. We returned home well satisfied and took our ease. We were delighted with this hunting-ground, and after that went out hunting every day.

Now by and by Amiran Darejanisdze began to miss his three retainers Asan Badridze, Ali Momadisdze, and Qamar Qamareli. The queen asked us, 'What is grieving Amiran Darejanisdze?' And we replied, 'It is the lack of those three retainers of his.' The queen said, 'They must be good men, since he is grieving thus.' And we replied, 'They are lion-dchabukis and good men indeed.' Then she declared, 'As they are not here, we must put aside gifts for them.' And after that, whenever they bestowed gifts upon us they would put some by for each of those [others] as well. The queen was displeased with Amiran Darejanisdze because he had not brought them, but he told her, 'I too should have liked to have

them here with me, but when I set out they were away from home, having gone off on the business of my lord Emir Mumli.<sup>1</sup> After that they dispensed still more gifts. The Lord Treasurer came, and the queen took from him the keys of a hundred vaults, saying, 'These are the keys of a hundred vaults: entrust them to whom you will.' Amiran told me [to take them]: I did so and went to the vaults and began to look through them. We spent many days in going over them, but we could not see all of their riches, for they were beyond counting. And yet they told us that Lady Khuareshan had retained a hundred vaults for herself—such a number did she possess!

King of Kings, give ear: may you live for ever!—As we sat feasting they brought in a certain strange fruit, such as we had never seen before. We asked where it came from, but the queen only replied that it was not of that land. And indeed it looked somewhat withered. The king said, 'A strange fruit is this, and I would fain see the land it comes from.' Much grieved were the queen and Lady Khuareshan at these words! The queen told him, 'It is not of this land: merchants from India brought it.' The king, however, would not believe this, and replied, 'I have known merchants of Baghdad who have been in India, but none of them had ever seen such a fruit as this. Nor have I myself.—Now, tell me the truth!'

After he had spoken these words we looked at Lady Khuareshan: tears were flowing from her eyes! The king looked at her, and then demanded of the queen, 'What is it that is distressing everyone and causing Lady Khuareshan to weep?' The queen was loath to speak, but the king insisted and would not be denied: so at length she ordered the barons to tell him the story. Then one of them, Ali by name, rose, made obeisance, and said, 'Oh King, may you live for ever! May God prosper your friends and bring confusion upon those who are false to you!—When Bakajar the Valiant first came here he had with him his astrologer Jamsar, he who fashioned those talismans you encountered upon the road.<sup>2</sup> Now in this<sup>3</sup> land there is a garden, a royal pleasance without equal, and there it is that this fruit is to be found. Bakajar the Valiant came on it and, grudging it to other men, had the astrologer Jamsar fashion a

<sup>1</sup> This is the one passage in the text to suggest that Amiran's retainers may have been under some direct personal feudal obligations to the emir.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 102.

<sup>3</sup> Reading *amas* for *amis*.

talisman: from that day to this no one has entered the garden—nor will anyone ever contrive to do so. The fruit which you saw is washed down from time to time by a river, and that is how they come to find it. All this we have heard from our fathers, for no one has ever seen the garden since those days,<sup>1</sup> nor ever will.’

Amiran Darejanisdze asked, ‘Have you heard anything concerning this talisman of late?’ And Ali replied, ‘We have heard that it is a huge dragon.’

The whole realm grieved sorely, for they felt sure that Darejanisdze would not let well alone, but would set out to do battle with the dragon, and that it would kill him. Feasting came to an end for the day, and Amiran Darejanisdze said, ‘Since no one else has yet gone to fight with the dragon it behoves me to do so: and you can rejoice, for God has willed that this garden should be opened up by me.’

To be short, they determined upon battle for the following day.<sup>2</sup> The news spread in every city and throughout the realm that Amiran Darejanisdze was going out to do battle with the dragon, and a multitude, both men and women, gathered, saying, ‘Let us go and look on, and, if it be God’s will,<sup>3</sup> perish before them!’

The queen came in tears and said, ‘If you have any pity for my old age, do not go!’ But Amiran would not heed her, and she could not stop him. Neither the queen nor Lady Khuareshan, however, would consent to stay behind, and they set out with us. All the men of the realm did likewise, some purposing to fight and some to watch. And so we took our departure.

Such was the dread in which the dragon was held that we found no living soul anywhere within a day’s journey of it. We saw the walls of the garden from afar: a league<sup>4</sup> high they were. Strange scents and perfumes were wafted to us from that distant garden.

Here is Amiran’s destruction of the dragons, and his entry into the garden guarded by the talismans

At first as we went forward we could see nothing, neither dragon nor any other living thing. Two gates had the garden: that fearful dragon guarded one, and a smaller dragon the other. Both the gates were of copper.

<sup>1</sup> Reading *çagmart* for *gagmart*.

<sup>2</sup> This formula appears somewhat inappropriately here.

<sup>3</sup> Reading *mashala* for *masha*: the sense of the sentence is uncertain.

<sup>4</sup> Reading *milisa* (*mili*: Latin *mille*; approximately 5 miles) for *millionisa*.

When we caught sight of the dragons they were hurling huge boulders about which, had they struck anyone, would have made dust of him<sup>1</sup> in a trice. As we approached a man appeared. He turned in our direction, and then when he had seen us he gave a fierce shout. Out [from its gate] came the fearful dragon—never have I seen such a huge one anywhere! It opened its mouth, belched forth flame, and made a dreadful noise that was like the thunder of the surf. Then the smaller dragon came out from the other gate. Next copper-men appeared upon [the wall], and from them came strange sounds. King of Kings, give ear!—That was a day of terror indeed, and not a man of the country but had his heart in his mouth. In truth none of them had set out with much thought of doing battle, and now all idea of it went clean from them. They asked Amiran Darejanisdze if he meant to engage the smaller dragon, but he replied, 'That would not be a good plan: while the larger is still alive, what use would it be to have the smaller dead?'

He would have had the royal guard go in a body to engage the smaller dragon, but they gave him no answer. Then Amiran Darejanisdze called for his best horse and put on his armour—and everyone wept: some for fear of the dragons, and some because they grieved that the king was going to do battle.

Amiran Darejanisdze looked over at Lady Khuareshan, and, seeing her eyes filled with tears, said to her, 'Do not weep, my soul!—Behold now my prowess and the power of my arm!' She could give him no answer through her tears, but came up to him as if fain not to let him go. He laughed and said, 'My soul, if you cling to me, how can I fight with these dragons?' Then he said to us, 'You three go against the smaller—for I can see that those men [of the guard] are not going to.' I replied, 'I am going to stay with you.' He said to me, 'I have no need of a helper: you go along too.' But I would not obey, and, while Aban Kabanisdze and Kowos Kosidze went off, I stayed with him.

Amiran Darejanisdze girt on two scimitars, gripped a long-sword, and charged. The queen and she who was his very soul watched him, while the whole assemblage moved forward. Those copper-men hurled fearful boulders at him: [one of] these struck his horse on the head and killed it, but did not do Amiran himself any harm. He leapt from the horse and charged on foot, like a panther.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Literally, 'would have obliterated him'.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 199: also *Chronicle*, p. 34, line 7, where the comparison is specifically

They continued to throw many boulders at him, but still they did not succeed in doing him any harm.

When he came up to the dragon it opened its mouth to engulf him: he struck with his long-sword and shivered it on the gaping mouth. Then he drew one of his scimitars—and this he shivered too. After that he drew the other, struck [the dragon's] head and cleft through to the brain, whereupon the dragon twisted itself up into a coil. Darejanisdze flung himself upon it, but it seized him by both feet and got his legs into its jaws up as far as the knees. Then I came up and struck it on the back with my scimitar—but failed to do it much harm. The dragon and Amiran Darejanisdze struggled together: it did not contrive to engulf any more of him—partly because of my hacking away and cutting deeply with my scimitar. Still, I could not make it leave hold of Amiran Darejanisdze. And now there was weeping and piteous lamentation.

Presently Amiran drew out the dagger he kept in his boot and thrust it into the dragon's gullet. Taken by surprise, the dragon immediately loosed him from its mouth. As soon as he was free he struck again with his scimitar and cut deeply into its head—but then the dragon turned on me, engulfed me up to my waist, together with my horse, and fled. My lord Amiran Darejanisdze overtook it, struck it with his scimitar, and cut it clean through. So huge was that dragon that it could take me and my horse easily into its throat! Amiran set us, horse and rider, free once more, unhurt.

After that Amiran perceived that Aban Kabanisdze and Kowos Kosidze were struggling with the other dragon. It caught hold of Aban Kabanisdze together with his horse: but, not being big enough to engulf them, it fled after it had seized them. Kowos Kosidze, however, overtook it, struck it with his scimitar, and killed it.—Then, when we had both dragons slaughtered, the copper-men fell all to pieces and vanished.<sup>1</sup>

Great was the rejoicing in the assemblage! They declared that drawn in respect of bravery; R 57, 1020, 1052, 1154; *Shāhnāma* (W), iii, p. 348 ('leopard-like'); *Roland*, p. 94, lines 1110-11:

Quant Rollant veit que la bataille serat,  
Plus se fait fiers que leon ne leupart.

<sup>1</sup> It would seem probable that there has been some confusion in this story of two 'talismans' themes, in one of which the device is a dragon, in the other embodied in a number of copper-men. Apart from their slaughter leading to the disintegration of the copper-men, the dragons, as the story stands, seem to be devoid of talismanic characteristics.

there was no one like Amiran Darejanisdze among the sons of men, or any who had such retainers. Then they sang the praises of the queen for having chosen such a dchabuki to be their king.

After that we went into the garden: such another there cannot be upon the face of all the earth! In it we found wondrous trees and delightful streams, every fragrance of God's creation, and all kinds of fruit. We saw some fine trees enclosed by a wall, and they told us, 'Out of those trees there comes an oil which will heal any sick man to whom it is applied: if a little of it is dropped into the eyes of a blind man, he will be able to see—it cures every disease.' The wonders of this garden cannot be told of by the tongue of man! We stayed there for some time, taking our ease and hunting—for there were hunting-grounds near by. And then we went off, rejoicing greatly.

Oh King, may you live for ever!—Truly Amiran could not have given his bride better proof of his prowess! Amid much rejoicing we went back to the capital, where they presented Amiran Darejanisdze with great gifts and with the keys of all the castles and cities of the realm, and invested him with the kingship.<sup>1</sup> Then after spending some time there in festivity we set out in triumph for Baghdad. We travelled in great splendour, escorted by the aznauris and the host of the realm, and laden with very many gifts.

Now his brother Sabur<sup>2</sup> Rabagisdze had heard how Tsitlosani Dchabuki had met his death at the hands of Amiran Darejanisdze, and had come with a fearful host to bar our path and to take vengeance for him upon us. And this Sabur far excelled his brother in prowess!

King of Kings, give ear!—On arriving home our lord's retainers Ali Momadisdze, Asan Badridze, and Qamar Qamareli had asked where their lord Amiran Darejanisdze was. Then on being told where we had gone they had set out to follow us. And they had met with Sabur Rabagisdze.

Here is the meeting of Amiran Darejanisdze's three retainers with Sabur Rabagisdze; Amiran Darejanisdze's coming upon them while they were fighting; and the fearful battle which followed

Sabur Rabagisdze was on the way with his host when those

<sup>1</sup> This last statement renders *gakhelmcip'ebulni*, which in the text occurs in a position corresponding to the end of the next sentence of the translation.

<sup>2</sup> Persian *Shāhpur*; literally, 'prince'.

three retainers of our lord's met with him: he asked them, 'Brothers, who are you?' They replied, 'We are retainers of the lord Amiran Darejanisdze.' And as soon as they had said this, Sabur shouted to his host to kill them.

Then those three drew their scimitars and engaged the host, which was drawn from [? the finest warriors in] every land. They set their backs against a great rock, and one after another they took their turn with the fighting. They lasted out a week so, and in this battle they slaughtered the greater part of the host. They [of the host] said themselves that they had killed three thousand men. Yet Sabur Rabagisdze's pride would not let him come to do battle with them himself.

As we approached the battle Amiran Darejanisdze looked at it and said, 'I can see a fierce battle, but who are in it I cannot tell.' We went on for a little, and then he said, 'Those are my retainers, Ali Momadisdze, Asan Badridze, and Qamar Qamareli!—Now how do they come to be here? They must have come in search of us.' We made haste, and then as we came up with the battle Amiran Darejanisdze called out, 'Ho! We are here!' Then the three looked over towards us, saw who we were, rejoiced, and took fresh heart. Straight away all three of them made a charge together and killed many horses and men. We on our side came up, engaged, and killed a large number as well.

Sabur Rabagisdze heard this report: 'Certain men have come to the aid of those three, and among them there is one whose like our eyes have never seen!' He knew that this must be Amiran Darejanisdze, and called off his host, saying, 'It is for me to do battle now!' Then he sent a man with this message: 'I have come to do battle with you because of your killing my brother, Tsitlosani Dchabuki: but I have not slaughtered those retainers of yours, so why did you slaughter mine?—You may be sure that the hour of either your death or mine is close at hand, for tomorrow you and I must do battle!'

This was the reply Amiran Darejanisdze sent: 'Your brother brought his death upon himself by his own arrogance: it was by ill-chance that he met his death at my hands—I had no wish for it. And now I pity you too, for you are going to die in the same fashion! As for slaughtering your host, I have been doing so because they flung themselves upon those three in numbers beyond counting. I do not care if you yourself did not join them in this! Now give



heed to this message of ours: do not bring your brother's fate upon yourself, but withdraw in peace!

On hearing those words Sabur Rabagisdze flew into a rage, and sent another messenger—and they determined upon battle for the following day.

When day had broken Sabur Rabagisdze put on his armour and mounted a black steed. (Together with all his host he was clad in black in mourning for his brother.) He came out from his side, and Amiran Darejanisdze went out from ours. They circled round each other at the gallop, shouted, and engaged. The blows they struck upon each other's armour were like the thunder in the heavens! Each killed many horses under the other and shivered three scimitars upon his head. The battle lasted until dusk without either's gaining a victory. They separated, and then the next morning they came out and engaged again. This mighty battle lasted into a third day; and ever more fiercely did they fight.

Irrked by the evenness of the battle, Amiran Darejanisdze said to himself, 'If I vanquish him I will kill him!' That night,<sup>1</sup> however, the host sent a man to Amiran Darejanisdze with this message: 'If you vanquish him, we beg you by God in Heaven not to kill him, for he is the last of his house!' My lord sent the reply to the host that he would not kill him. Sabur Rabagisdze sent a man again with this message: 'Tomorrow will see the death of either you or me!'

Amiran Darejanisdze said, 'If he defeats me, Sabur Rabagisdze will kill me, since his purpose is to avenge his brother Tsitlosani Dchabuki.' But he had been amazed by Rabagisdze's valour, and he went on, 'By God in Heaven, he is such a good dchabuki that if I vanquish him I will not kill him.'

The following day Sabur Rabagisdze put on his armour, with a breastplate covering the weak places, and shouted, 'Come out, Darejanisdze!' When he heard this Darejanisdze came out quickly into the maidan: they circled round each other at the gallop—and then began a battle fiercer than any they had yet had.

At length Darejanisdze gave a shout, drew off his horse, and cried out, 'Take heed, Sabur Rabagisdze, for I am coming down on you now!' Sabur also drew off his horse, and shouted, 'The hour of your death has come!' And there and then they charged down on each other.

<sup>1</sup> Sc. the one after the third day of battle.

Stricken with fear lest he should be killed, Sabur Rabagisdze's host cried out with one voice, 'Amiran Darejanisdze, by God in Heaven, make good your promise!' On that cry from the host Amiran threw away his scimitar; then, when he came up to Sabur he seized hold of him, wrenched him from his saddle, lifted him aloft, and dashed him to the ground. But he did not kill him.

Then the whole of Sabur's host dismounted, made obeisance, and sang the praises of Amiran Darejanisdze, saying, 'Blessed is your prowess: never has such a dchabuki as you been seen among the sons of men!' Then Amiran Darejanisdze and Sabur Rabagisdze went off together, and that day they took their ease and became friends. The next morning Sabur Rabagisdze went off, and we set out for Baghdad, rejoicing and triumphant. Here ends the chapter of the Talismans. King of Kings, give ear!—We went to that building which you have seen, and Amiran brought there a painter who painted the portraits of him himself, of that radiant one [Khuareshan], and of all of us his retainers.<sup>1</sup> May God grant that your reign endure for ever, Amen.

<sup>1</sup> There is clearly some confusion here with the Badri-Nosar-Amiran story (see pp. 2-3, 38); also with the account in this one of Amiran's visit to the building at the beginning of his quest (see p. 101).

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*The Story of Sepedavle<sup>2</sup> Darispanisdze<sup>3</sup>*


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King of Kings, give ear: may you live for ever! May God prosper your friends and bring confusion upon those who are false to you!—Emir Mumli of Baghdad had built halls for use when out hunting upon the plain. I have travelled through all India, and was bred in Persia, but never have my eyes looked on such halls or on such hunting-grounds! The king<sup>4</sup> used to spend three months of the year in those halls, which stood at the meeting-point of three great provinces, and there he would observe the festival of the New Year.<sup>5</sup> Never has anything like it been seen by the eye of man! Emir Mumli would have there with him all his barons of note, but none might come without his express command. The hours when gifts were distributed were known to everyone, and any who had a good leopard, hawk, or other creature of the chase, or who had [fine] ornaments or raiment would save these things for such times. Skilled minstrels and tumblers would come from all parts, and there would be such diversions, gaiety, and hunting excursions as cannot be told of by the tongue of man.<sup>6</sup>

One day Emir Mumli of Baghdad said to his barons, 'Summon Amiran Darejanisdze—where is he?' And they replied, 'He is out hunting.'—All of us, Darejanisdze's retainers, were with him, and we were enjoying good sport, with gaiety and diversion. There

<sup>1</sup> In the text, 'ninth'.

<sup>2</sup> *Sep'e* = 'king'; 'royal'. *Davle* comes from the Persian *doval*, plural of *doulat*, literally, 'government': a royal style.

<sup>3</sup> The *Daris* element comes from the Persian *Dārā* (Darius).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 1, n. 2.

<sup>5</sup> *Navruz*: Persian *nou ruz*.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Geoffrey of Monmouth's account of one of King Arthur's feasts: '... there never came to any festival so many noblemen and noblewomen, and fine horses, and hawks, and dogs, and precious jewels, golden vessels, and splendid garments of satin and purple, such as came there. For there was not a man this side of Yssbaen [Spain], who wished to benefit, who did not come there to receive gifts innumerable.' (Translation of Welsh MS. No. LXI of Jesus College, Oxford, by R. E. Jones in A. Griscom's ed. of the Latin text of the *Historia Regum Britanniae*, London, 1929, p. 455.)

were some men with bows, some with hawks and leopards, and some with other hunting-beasts—all in such numbers as we<sup>1</sup> or the other barons might desire.

When we returned we repaired to a banqueting-hall richly adorned with gold and silver. A royal feast was spread. Bowls and goblets of turquoise and ruby were brought, tumblers performed and did their tricks, and the assemblage drank ruby-coloured wine.

Out of doors they broke blood horses and went through exercises, while some played chess.<sup>2</sup>—They amused themselves in different ways, each as he chose. Then at length the king put an end to the feasting outside, and went into his hall,<sup>3</sup> taking his barons with him. There he had a yet more gorgeous and splendid feast, and bestowed gifts upon all in due measure. After that the assemblage broke up.—But such magnificence and such diversions did we enjoy that by your head I have not told you of one-half of the gaiety and delights!<sup>4</sup>

One day Emir Mumli of Baghdad held a magnificent feast in the open, and then when that was done gathered his barons together and had another spread inside his hall.<sup>3</sup> Amiran Darejanisdze was placed on a gold-brocaded cushion, and sat close to the king, within arm's length of him, while the other barons took their places in due order.

That day in the course of the feast Emir Mumli said, 'What ails you [all]? Now, some one of you with a story must tell it to me.' Darejanisdze declared, 'I have already told you of everything I have ever heard of, or seen, or done—and I have nothing new.' But Emir Mumli assured him, 'I will not plague you: someone else will speak up.'

Then one by the name of Omad Amadisdze,<sup>5</sup> a baron of

<sup>1</sup> Presumably Amiran and his retainers.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the description of the amusements of Charlemagne's knights in the orchard at Cordres (*Roland*, p. 12, lines 111-13):

As tables juent purs els esbaneir  
E as eschecs li plus saive et li veill,  
E escremissent cil bachelers leger.

<sup>3</sup> The word used in these two places—*saçoli*, 'bedchamber'—seems incongruous. It may possibly signify a room with couches; a 'lounge': but it seems easiest to regard it as an error for *sakhli*.

<sup>4</sup> This whole account of the 'gaiety and delights' is confused. The verbal forms suggest that it is to be understood as a description of routine, but it is difficult to give the text as it stands a consistently frequentative sense.

<sup>5</sup> (Ahmad Ahmad-*isdze*).

Baghdad, rose and said, 'Emir of Emirs, may you live for ever! Since Your Majesty desires to hear a story, I will tell you of certain things which I have witnessed with my own eyes which will make you declare that you have never heard of anything more tremendous. I will tell you of my good deeds, and will venture also to speak of my evil ones. You will marvel at the good, and remember them to my credit—and by Your Majesty's head, I will give you a faithful account of all.'

Emir Mumli rejoiced, and had the barons make an end of feasting. All<sup>1</sup> withdrew save the barons: when he had placed these on cushions round about him the emir said to Omad Amadisdze, 'Now, tell me all, leaving out nothing.' Omad replied, 'Oh King, may you live for ever! I will indeed relate the whole of my story, and leave nothing out.'

As a boy I was more than a match for any of my fellows, and at play I was prone to treat my comrades roughly,<sup>2</sup> so that the folk of the city of Baghdad complained about me. Now once when my father and his brother were sitting together my uncle said to my father, 'That son of yours is very quick to retort, and is rude and ill-mannered as well. Either he is going to turn out a good dchabuki, without equal, or he will go crazy and end quite mad!' And my father replied, 'Brother, I think the same.'

Hearing this I felt a pang, and said to myself, 'I am going to turn out a good dchabuki!'—When I grew up I used to go out hunting, having a great love of the chase. Whenever I met with lions, panthers, or other wild beasts or game I would kill all like cats. I came to have a good opinion of myself, and thought, 'There is no dchabuki like me today upon the face of all the earth—but now I must prove myself upon men, for beasts don't take much killing.'

Now not long after this we had an Egyptian caravan in Baghdad which was held back from setting out [homeward] by fear, having been told that brigands were lying in wait for it. I went [to the caravaneers] and said to them, 'Give me a guide's fee and I will see you safely to your own land.' They gave me a large sum, and so I went with them as their guide. As we journeyed the brigands shadowed the caravan. [At a certain point] five hundred armed men lay in wait, and when we drew near they bore down upon us. At

<sup>1</sup> Attendants, presumably.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Dārāb's treatment of his childhood's playmates, *Shāhnāma* (W), v, p. 298.

that I charged fiercely, shouted, and engaged. By Your Majesty's head, I slaughtered and routed them in such fashion that those who escaped me were few indeed! After that I saw the caravan to safety and returned home. This, oh King, was my first battle: I was well pleased with myself, and thought, 'There is no dchabuki like me upon the face of all the earth!'

King of Kings, give ear!—I said to myself, 'Now I am going to fight with Amiran Darejanisdze: by Heaven, the man who can do battle with five hundred must have the strength in combat of as many!' I made ready and set off, bent on throwing down a challenge to Amiran. Presently, however, I began to feel ashamed and said to myself, 'Are you not ashamed, Omad Amadisdze, to set out to offer battle to Darejanisdze with no more than petty exploits behind you? Rather go off somewhere else, prove yourself [further]; and then, if you have achieved something fine, you may have combat with him!' Emir of Emirs, may you live for ever!—I saw to the affairs of my household, and then set out for Basra. And whenever hosts or beasts stood in my path I would slaughter them all, or put them to flight.

No sooner had I arrived in the city of Basra than it was thrown into turmoil. The Arabian king invaded the land and, having captured all the towns round about, advanced right up to the gates of the capital, where [the emir of Basra] was. The emir's barons went out, together with all the townsfolk, and fought, but [the Arab host] charged fiercely, forced them to retreat, and pressed them back inside—for that besieging host was countless. Thus did the Arabian king come up to the city gate.

Now the emir of Basra had three champions, lion-dchabukis, and presently these went out and fought. In a great and fierce battle they quitted themselves well, for each of them killed a hundred men. They returned in triumph, and the emir came out to meet them with all the barons and townsfolk, and bestowed many gifts upon them.

The following day the same three champions went out again, and triumphed in yet greater and fiercer battles. They all returned unscathed, and [those inside the city] sang their praises and presented them with many gifts.

The Arabian king sent an urgent summons to a champion of his, a lion-dchabuki whom he had not got with him; and the champion arrived that same day. The following morning the Arabian king

and all his host put on their armour, mounted their horses, and advanced towards us. Presently we saw a single horseman coming on ahead of the host. Spear in hand, he came up under the walls of the city and shouted to us, 'If you have any champions among you, let them come out for single combat: or if you will not come singly, come in strength!'

At these words the three began to put on their armour, arguing among themselves, 'No, *I* am going!'—'No, *I* am!' . . . Then the emir of Basra seated himself upon a dais; our clarioneers and taborers came forward, those of the Arabian king outside did likewise—and all sounded their clarions and tabors. Great was the apprehension!

One of the Basran champions went out, and the Arabian king called out to him, 'You will need a stout heart for your battle—there is none to help you here!' Then they circled round each other at the gallop and charged. The Arab thrust with his spear, lifted the Basran out of his saddle, dashed him to the ground, killed him, then wheeled about and went off. The Arabian king came out to meet him, presented him with many gifts, and sang his praises. Then they went off to their lodging. Meanwhile the emir of Basra and his whole city grieved over what had happened, and said, 'God must indeed have rejected us utterly to visit His wrath so heavily upon us!'

The next day the Arabian king mounted and went once more to the maidan with his whole host, ready for battle. The same man<sup>1</sup>—he had laid aside his spear and girt on a scimitar—came out, advanced once more to the foot of the wall, and shouted out the same words as before, 'Come out—a single man, or in strength!' Then the second champion went out, and we sat down to watch. They charged each other and closed: the Basran struck with his scimitar, but failed to cut deep. Then the Arab struck him on the right shoulder, cleft him through to the top of the left thigh, killed him, and then went off. They came forward to meet him with raiment and many gifts and with richly-caparisoned steeds, and sang his praises. But the emir of Basra and all his barons grieved over what had happened.

On the *third day* the Arabian king came out once more, followed by his clarioneers and taborers. His champion came forward, halted at the end of the maidan, and issued his challenge.—Emir of Emirs, much does it amaze me that, with the first two champions

<sup>1</sup> Sc. the Arabian king's champion.

slaughtered so easily, the third should have remained steadfast! He put on his armour, and when the emir of Basra said, 'Do not go out, brother! God has accorded them victory, and I will not have him kill you'—he replied, 'To you I am beholden for both place and gold: fighting is my trade, and I must go out and give battle. Perhaps I shall avenge my brothers.' Out he went, and all the people took their places to watch. All said, 'Today will bring us either death or life: if he meets with misfortune our city is lost.'

When [the contestants] came out the Arabian champion had a bow with him.—They circled round each other at the gallop, and then when they charged the [Arabian] champion struck [the Basran] on the breast with an arrow which passed clean through him, buried itself into the ground up to the feathers, and killed him. The Arabian champion wheeled about and went off, they came out to meet him with fine raiment, caparisoned steeds, and many other gifts, and then returned to their lodging.

Inside the city there was weeping and fearful distress. The people said, 'We can do one of two things: we can either sally out all together, calling upon God for aid, and fight—or else treat for terms and surrender the city.'

In the end the idea of treating for terms prevailed over that of fighting, and they decided to surrender the city. King of Kings, give ear!—I said to myself, 'I came here to prove my prowess—and by Heaven this [Arabian champion] is indeed a good dchabuki! I will go out now and engage him: that will furnish the proof!'

I went to the emir of Basra's door and said to one by the name of Abram, first among the emir's viziers, 'I am a dchabuki of Baghdad: as I came here to prove my prowess I am ready to engage this enemy of yours. Now go and tell this to your lord.' Overjoyed, he went and told the emir of Basra. The emir was delighted, and summoned me. I went before him and made obeisance. He asked me, 'Are you Amiran Darejanisdze?'—And I replied, 'I am not Amiran, oh King, but Omad Amadisdze.' Grieved at this, the emir of Basra turned away and sat down again, seeming to have no further hopes of me. Then he said, 'Brother, I cannot let you do battle with this man, for you have not received any favours at my hands—I will not have him kill you!'

I replied, 'I am a dchabuki of Baghdad, and I am looking for another on whom I can prove myself. I will indeed go out and fight: should God grant me victory, it will be a piece of good



fortune for Your Majesty, while if he kills me—well, wherever I go, I cannot escape death [for ever]!’ Just then a man from the Arabian king came before the emir of Basra and delivered this message: ‘God has accorded me victory, and you have not the power to oppose me any longer: but if you will surrender this city forthwith I give you my word that I shall let you go away in peace.’

The emir of Basra called me over and said, ‘Brother, you see what straits I am in?’ And I replied, ‘I will seek to avenge your champions: God will protect me, and I am ready for battle now.’ When he heard me say this the emir of Basra rejoiced, and sent back this answer: ‘I have still one champion left: let him and yours meet tomorrow, and if yours is victorious yet again I will not seek to resist any longer, but will surrender the city into your hands.’ The messenger went off and made his report; and the Arabian king rejoiced greatly and said that he accepted the proposal. Inside the city, however, there was distress and weeping. Prayers were offered up for me; but everyone said, ‘The Arabian champion is sure to win tomorrow: God must surely have willed the death of this man!’

In the morning, when the sun had spread forth its light, the emir of Basra came out and took his seat upon the dais, and the clarioneers and tabors came forward. Inside the city there was distress: the people came and gazed at me, and prayed to God on my behalf. The Arabian king came up also, and his men too sounded their clarions and tabors: alike among them and our own people inside [the city] there was a great tumult.

The Arabian champion advanced and shouted, ‘Why do you delay?’

(When Omad Amadisdze had got thus far with his story, Emir Mumli of Baghdad, who was delighted with it, put his head-cushions down on the carpet, and then settled down to listen eagerly once again. King of Kings, give ear: may you live for ever! —Emir Mumli said, ‘Omad Amadisdze, you are to tell me the whole of your story faithfully, withholding nothing!’ And Omad went on.<sup>1</sup>)

When he shouted to me I went out. As he had ruthlessly struck and killed the [third] Basran champion [with an arrow] before there had been any fighting at all, I was glad to see that he had not got

<sup>1</sup> In the text eight words from the opening of the parenthesis are here pointlessly repeated.

his bow with him. I advanced, and he too moved forward. We circled round each other at the gallop and charged. Straight away he thrust at me fiercely with his spear, as though he meant to lift me up on it—but he failed to move me, and his spear broke. Then I gave a shout, struck his helmet with my scimitar—and by Your Majesty's head, I cleft him down to the breast and killed him!

Then, instead of going in, I charged furiously upon the Arabian king's host, and that day I killed five hundred men. After that I turned about and went back towards the city in triumph. The emir of Basra and the townsfolk came out to meet me: they embraced me, kissed me, sang my praises, and presented me with numberless gifts—and indeed, by your head, no one could complain that my victory fell short in anything!

That night I told the townsfolk to muster a body of men in armour, and when day had broken I led this out, fell upon the host, slaughtered it, put it to flight and ravaged it so that but few escaped. When I came in again the emir of Basra came to meet me: he embraced me and kissed me, while the others kissed my hand. After that the emir and all the Basrans gave me presents beyond number and hailed me as their saviour.

King of Kings, give ear!—Lest you should doubt whether I ever performed any of those deeds: there was a caravan from Baghdad in the city at that time, and all those who were in it know of them.

The emir of Basra sent a man to me with this message: 'Stay with me, and I will divide my treasure into three parts, and give one to you.' But I replied, 'I cannot remain here, for I must return to my own lord.' Then after they had given me countless presents I said farewell, set off, and came back to Baghdad.

I thought to myself, 'There is indeed no dchabuki like me upon the face of all the earth—*now* I am going to have battle with Amiran Darejanisdze!' I put on my armour and went to his door—but then I was overcome with shame, and said to myself, 'He has won great renown and had many triumphs: I have achieved nothing which can compare with his deeds! I ought to go forth again and do something really splendid. After that will be the time to fight with him.'

(Here Amiran Darejanisdze laughed and said, 'Brother, since you have such tales to tell—by the life of Emir Mumli, you must have been a fine lad<sup>1</sup> and a true dchabuki!' Then Amadisdze continued.)

<sup>1</sup> Taking *qma* in its modern sense (see p. 236).

I put honest men in charge of my household and gave them all needful instructions. Then, thinking to myself, 'I am going either to find my death or to prove my prowess!'—I made ready and set out.

After I had passed out of our own land I came to a plain where during three days' journey I did not see a single man, or any other living creature. Gloom descended upon me, and I had half a mind to turn back. However, I went on for a little, and then presently I saw a tent upon the plain, with a tethered horse by the entrance and a spear stuck in the ground close by. I said to myself, 'Here is the dchabuki on whom I will make my prowess known!'

I went up to the entrance—and then stopped when I saw a man in his shirt lying upon a couch with at his side a lady who was as radiant as the sun. I asked him, 'Who are you, my fine dchabuki?' But in reply he only said, 'Brother, where do you come from?' Then I told him, 'I am a dchabuki of Baghdad, and I am looking for a man on whom I can prove myself.' He said, 'Fall back while I put on my armour, and then I will prove you.' Emir of Emirs, rejoicing greatly at this I fell back some way, and put on my armour likewise. He came out armed, mounted his horse, charged, came up to me—but then fear bereft him of the power to make a thrust with his spear. Then, however, he managed to lift it, struck, and shivered it on my head—and then he fled, so speedily that I could not see which way he had gone.

Amazed and grieved to find such cowardice in the youth, I turned back to the tent,<sup>2</sup> went up to that lady who was so fair to look upon, and said to her, 'Sister, God knows you have a coward for a husband!' But nothing there did I lay hands on save one loaf of bread.

I went off, and for two days more I journeyed on through a very desolate region. I felt wretched, gloom filled my heart, and I had half a mind to turn back. Then I saw a man of great stature approaching. He was [clad in] black and rode upon a large black steed. And I rejoiced, for I thought, 'Now he will prove my prowess for me!'

I called out to him, saying, 'Dchabuki, I am Omad Amadisdze, a dchabuki of Baghdad, on my travels so that I may make my prowess known.' And I recounted all my feats—for I wanted to put him in a panic with talk. Then he said to me, 'What cause have you and I to fight?' But I only replied, 'You are a good dchabuki, and so you and I must do battle—there can be no question about

<sup>1</sup> Reading the variant *saidgan* for *esret*.

<sup>2</sup> Reading *karausa* for *kargsa*.

it.' Then he asked, 'How can you feel any hatred for me?'—but I urged forward my horse, saying, 'No longer can I contain my rage!'—and charged to strike him. As I came up, however, he laid hold of a dagger he had in his boot, drew it out and plunged it into his own heart, saying, 'What greater hurt than this could you yourself have done me?' With that he fell from his horse and expired at once.

Emir of Emirs, much grieved was I, and I reviled him for his wickedness.—I left him, went on, and journeyed full of gloom for another day. Then a man on horseback drew near—but enraged at the recollection of those others, instead of saying anything to him, I crashed my horse against him, so that, together with his horse, he went rolling underneath me. Then I leaped on him and began to abuse him, saying, 'God must have been moved to anger against you [all]! Some of you fly, and some kill themselves with their own hands! The pity of it that you should have turned out to be such cowards and good-for-nothings!' Then the man lying on the ground said, 'Brother, what wrong have I done you that you should commit such an outrage? What ill-will was there between you and me?' I told him, 'I am on my travels in order to make my prowess known—but all of you whom I meet with are cowards and villains! That is why I have treated you in this fashion.'

He asked, 'Does the land you are going to have no dchabukis for you to fight?' I replied, 'There is no man upon earth to match me in combat!' Then he said, 'I did not mean to tell you about this man, but forgive me—you have shaken my wits! Now I will tell you about him: perhaps he will avenge me! Go on a little way and you will find Sepedavle Darispanisdze: engage him and he will quickly prove your prowess for you!'

When he had told me this I rejoiced, dismounted,<sup>1</sup> went up to him and said, 'Brother, forgive me and tell me about Sepedavle Darispanisdze.' He told me all about him, and ended, 'As you are already in his realm and are seeking everywhere for an opportunity for valiant deeds—by Heaven you will certainly find a real dchabuki!'

With that he mounted his horse and went off: I too went on a little way. Then I came upon a large number of tents, and thought that Sepedavle Darispanisdze must be there—but no. Many groups

<sup>1</sup> This 'dismounting' of one apparently already dismounted is probably an inadvertence.

of men were drinking wine, and they were all swearing by Sepedavle, and calling down blessings upon him. I asked those men who they were, and they replied, 'You must indeed be a traveller from afar since you do not know that!—We are Sepedavle's shepherds, and we have no less than a hundred chief shepherds set over us.' And I took wine with them.

Much did I admire the many large tents that were there. In these too they were singing, drinking wine, calling down blessings on Sepedavle, and swearing by him. I asked [the shepherds], 'Brothers, who are these?'<sup>1</sup> And they replied, 'They are the chief stud-grooms and their underlings.'

I went on. Two days did it take to pass through those tents—such was the opulence of Sepedavle! Then after I had left them behind I saw two men sitting together, drinking wine. When they saw me they knew that I must be a stranger and called me over. I went, and we took some food together and drank wine. Then presently one of them rose, filled a goblet, and said, 'May God prosper Sepedavle Darispanisdze—for there is not such another dchabuki upon the face of all the earth!'—and then drank. After that he sat down again, refilled the goblet, and proffered it to me, [saying], 'Now you too must call down a blessing on Sepedavle Darispanisdze, and drink.' But I replied, 'As I have come here expressly to fight with him I cannot call down a blessing on him until either he has vanquished me or I him.'

At these words they began to laugh and to mock me. One of them said, 'By Heaven, no one who saw the two of you together, you and Sepedavle, would say that you would be a match for him in battle!' I was much galled by their words, and would fain have slaughtered them. However, I did nothing to them, but got up in a rage and went off.

I journeyed on, and presently some more men came up: when they saw me they called me over, and I went. They asked me, 'Who are you, brother, and where do you come from?' I replied, 'I am a dchabuki of Baghdad, on my travels seeking to make my prowess known: having heard the deeds of Sepedavle Darispanisdze praised, I have come to do battle with him and to prove my worth in combat.'

When they heard these words they began to mock me, and one of them dismounted, flung himself on his knees, and said, snigger-

<sup>1</sup> Reading *arian* for *khart*'. The passage seems a little confused.

ing, 'We have no doubt that you will vanquish him<sup>1</sup>—but take pity on us and do not kill him, for he is the only one left of his father's sons; and, besides, he is puny and weak!'

Emir of Emirs, I was galled by this mockery, and went off. Presently a man riding upon a yellow-caparisoned mule appeared upon the road. He was clad in rich cloth of gold and had a golden turban upon his head. With him he had three attendants. Being still in a rage over those men behind I did not go up to join him. He sent one of his attendants to summon me, but still I would not go. After that he came up himself, greeted me, and said, 'I take you to be a stranger, one from a distant land.—Why are you in an ill humour? Have you fallen in with some knaves or other upon the road and been given offence?' As I listened to his talk he appeared to be a worthy man, and so I made him a reverence, which he returned. We exchanged courtesies, and then he asked about my history; who I was, and where I came from.

I told him all, saying, 'I am a dchabuki of Baghdad, on my travels in order to prove my prowess. And having heard of the great deeds of Sepedavle Darispanisdze, I desire to have battle with him.'

He replied, 'We know here that you men of Baghdad are good dchabukis, so your mettle does not surprise me.—Now if it please you, come along with us.' And he took me into his company.

Presently we came to a place where there were fine shady trees, with a *delightful stream flowing beneath them*. A repast had been prepared here in the coolness, and there were many attendants there as well. I learned that this baron was a vassal of Sepedavle Darispanisdze's. We sat down, took some food and drank wine, and then went to sleep.

After a time we roused ourselves, and when evening fell we set out another meal and sat down to it. The baron asked me to tell him of my deeds of prowess, and I told him of all that I had done. He said to me, 'By Heaven, you are a good dchabuki, and have done many fine things!'—and then continued, 'Listen, first I will tell you this: upon the face of all the earth there is no dchabuki like Sepedavle in countenance, build, or comeliness: and none who has had such triumphs. Secondly I am going on to tell you of his deeds and successes in battle: or rather, as it would not be possible to speak of them all, to describe those three which I have witnessed

<sup>1</sup> Reading *moerevi* for *momerevi*.

with my own eyes. And this counsel would I give you: if you still think when I have done that you can face him in battle, go and fight him; but if not, no matter how mighty you may deem yourself, turn about and go home. And lest turning about should seem shameful—by God in Heaven, I give you my word that I will not say anything about you anywhere.'

I thanked him heartily and said, 'I shall be much beholden to you if you will tell me of his deeds.'

This is what he told me.

First—our lords have not been sovereign rulers from ancient times, but were simple *aznauris* who by strength and prowess won kingship and greatness. Even such a *dchabuki* was Darispan, the father of Sepedavle. There are old men with long memories who say that he excelled even his son Sepedavle, but this I myself do not believe—no one, surely, could have done that! He overcame many neighbouring rulers, made himself a king, and seized countless lands. But when King Darispan, the father of Sepedavle, passed from his grandeur and died, he left behind him a son who was only a little boy. Then enemies beyond the borders took advantage of our lord's youth, refused to recognize him, assembled a host, and invaded. They seized all his lands, everything save one city, *Darispanshaar*,<sup>1</sup> which had been strongly fortified by retainers whom [Darispan] had trained up. Very fair<sup>2</sup> and pleasing was that city.

Many years went by, and Sepedavle grew up and began to perform heroic deeds. Then one day he went to his mother the queen and questioned her, saying, 'Why have we no possessions beyond this one city?—These others round about are so large and fair!' Weeping bitterly his mother the queen replied, 'My son, once wide lands and many cities were ours; but when the light of the sun was extinguished for us—when, leaving us with tear-filled eyes, your father died, our old enemies came, invaded us, and stripped us of everything. And we have remained worsted by them.' Now my lord's son had known nothing of all this.

Everyone used to say to the queen, 'Our enemies may be keeping a look-out for this boy, and so he might come to harm in battle; or again, they may scheme to drive him out of his wits with poison.'

<sup>1</sup> 'Darispan's city' (*Shaar* from Persian *shahr*).

<sup>2</sup> *Didi turp'a*. Perhaps, however, *did*i should be taken literally: 'Large, fair . . .'.

She gave heed, and used to prepare his food with her own hands, to lock the city gates herself, and to keep the keys in her own hands.

To be short—as soon as it came to the ears of our lord's chief enemies, Ara Dashvrisdze and Parsan<sup>1</sup> Rabashinisdze—lion-dchabukis both—that Sepedavle had grown up to give promise of becoming a good dchabuki, they quickly got together three thousand picked warriors, set out, and advanced upon us by stealth. They sent a hundred horsemen forward to the gates of the city, and in the morning these seized the cattle when they were driven out and bore them off.

### Here is Sepedavle Darispanisdze's first battle

At the noise of the horsemen's coming the queen went herself to the city gates and locked them. Sepedavle Darispanisdze, however, when he had put on his armour went to the gates and, without any help from anyone, shattered the lock. Then he went out, engaged those hundred horsemen, and slaughtered them so that but few escaped. Following in pursuit, he came up with the main body of the host; and this surrounded him and pressed in upon him.—By God in Heaven, without any help from anyone he slaughtered them so that of those three thousand few indeed were left, while their lords fled.

Sepedavle secured all the cities and lands that [his enemies] had seized, and then returned home unscathed. This was his first battle, and through it he had won all that [by rights] belonged to him.

[Ara and Parsan, however, still] held one city,<sup>2</sup> which was strong and hard to get at, being surrounded by rocks: there was no getting in except by one road. Here it was that those dchabukis our lord's enemies took refuge, while Sepedavle conquered all the land round the city.

After a time those dchabukis began to make sorties into the districts round about, raiding villages and taking plunder back with them. At last we set out for their city, but when we arrived at it we found that we could not storm it because they had placed an elephant before the gates where the foot-track led in: and we

<sup>1</sup> =Parsadan (Persian *Farīdun*).

<sup>2</sup> In the following passage the author uses *k'alak'i* ('city') and *cikhe* ('castle') indifferently.



could neither think of fighting with the elephant nor hit on any other plan.

Then one day Sepedavle Darispanisdze put on armour for foot-fighting, took his shield and advanced upon the elephant. As he approached to give battle it came forward to meet him, with a crew of twelve picked warriors. Sepedavle seized it by its trunk, swung it up in the air, along with the crew, then dashed it to the ground<sup>1</sup>—so killing [both it and its crew]. Then he strode up to the city gates, shattered them and made his way in. The two dchabukis and the townsfolk came to meet him, and there was a great battle. In the end Sepedavle slaughtered the two dchabukis and made himself master of the city: after that we returned home unscathed.

For some time after that we led a life of great ease. And then one day when we were out hunting some men from the marches of India came up, made obeisance, and sang [Sepedavle's] praises. We asked them who they were, and they told us, 'We are from the marches of India: we have heard that Sepedavle is a man of great worship and have come to look on him.' After that we went home.

That same day we brought those Indians in to our feasting, and the king questioned them about their land. They described its splendours, and then said, 'Oh King, may you live for ever!—We have come before you because we have heard tell of your great worship and prowess. Now this is what brings us. A unicorn has appeared in our fair<sup>2</sup> land and is laying it waste up to the city gates, so that we cannot go outside them. That is why we have come, and it is our prayer that you will deliver us from this unicorn. But we shall accept your decision as to what should be done.'

Sepedavle said to them, 'May God grant the fulfilment of your desire!' Then in the morning he said [to us], 'Those suppliants from the Indian marches have come hoping to take us back with them. Now if we were to refuse to go to that land, first it would be to our dishonour; second—I have never yet seen a unicorn, and I must not fail to prove myself on this one!' At first we tried to dissuade him, but it was in vain. Then he announced that we were going to set out with only a small host.

We made ready, set out, and after three months arrived in that

<sup>1</sup> '[Gerchâsp] saisit le pied d'un éléphant furieux, et le renversa incontinent par terre' (*Gerchâsp*, p. 119).

<sup>2</sup> The primary meaning of *uckho* is 'strange', 'foreign'. Perhaps here to be understood as 'distant'—?

land [on the marches of India]. The whole people heard of the arrival of Sepedavle Darispanisdze, and they came out to meet him, brought him presents, offered their submission, made obeisance, and sang his praises. We went to their capital, which was large and fair—and there, amid great rejoicing, they bestowed many gifts upon us.

After we had been there for a few days, Sepedavle Darispanisdze said to the men of the land, 'Now let me see this beast which was the cause of your having me brought here.' They led the way, and we went off to the unicorn's haunts. All the townsfolk, both men and women, came with us to watch. When we reached the top of a high hill we looked down, and saw the unicorn, as big as an elephant! Our hearts sank at the sight, and terror gripped us. Sepedavle put on his armour, took his long-sword, mounted his steed, and, saying, 'It does not become dchabukis to kill with arrows!'—went forward.

As soon as it saw him the unicorn charged. Sepedavle thrust with his long-sword at its chest, and pierced it. Then he drew his keen scimitar, struck the unicorn on the back, killed it like a cat—and then wheeled about. The townsfolk went forward to meet him, called down blessings on him, sang his praises, and bestowed numberless gifts upon him.

They kept us there in that city for a month. We liked the country, and went hunting and took our ease. Then at length we went off home.

And now, brother, that I have told you of these few of my lord's exploits, weigh your own against them: then, if you still think that you can face him in battle, come along and fight him. You find these stories astounding, perhaps—but if you see him you will say, 'Every quality proper to a dchabuki shines forth from this man: what they tell of him does him scant justice!'

I gave the baron many thanks, and then declared, 'Even if it meant a year's journey, I should still go to see him!'—He took me along with him—great was the splendour in which we travelled!—and after journeying for some time we arrived at Darispanshaar. Therein I beheld a large and fair city—never indeed has the eye of man seen one more splendid, for it was filled with fine-looking men and with all manner of magnificent and costly treasures.

The baron took me to his hall, and there entertained me. He

showed me great honour and presented me with countless gifts, saying, 'I needs must offer entertainment to such a guest, and for you my store of treasure will be opened ungrudgingly.'

He went off to the palace and told his lord about me. Sepedavle instructed him to inquire whether I were Amiran Darejanisdze, and he came back and asked me what my name was. And I told him that I was Omad Amadisdze. King of Kings, give ear!—We spent the night there [in the baron's hall]: then when day had broken my friend came and called me out, and we went off.

We arrived at the palace: five hundred men, all clad in brocade and with golden girdles round their waists, were standing at the entrance. We passed through the [outer] gates of the palace and came up to the entrance [to the building itself]. Here stood a thousand attendants, clad in gold brocade and with golden girdles studded with jewels round their waists: they made us obeisance, and we went in.

We entered a magnificent hall, silver-lined in each corner. When we appeared some barons who were sitting there in a close circle all rose. I made them a reverence, and they did likewise to me. I spoke to them courteously and then passed through. There were other halls, yet more splendid, and in these too there were barons seated. I made them reverences, and they me, and I spoke to them courteously before passing on. And so we progressed through halls ever more splendid, each with barons seated in it.

At length we entered one which was covered all over [on the outside with precious stones]. Inside there were golden canopies adorned with jewels and pearls, and underneath there were thrones covered with cloth of gold. Here, clad in wondrous cloth of gold and wearing a golden turban, sat Sepedavle Darispanisdze upon his throne. I gazed at him—never has the eye of man seen one more splendid-looking! In very truth, what they told of him did him scant justice. Below him upon golden chairs sat three barons.

After I had made obeisance to him he said to me, 'Come forward and embrace me!' But I replied, 'I could not presume to.' Then he said, 'So, brother, you are eager for battle, but not for friendship?'—At that I went forward and kissed his hand. After that, however, he would not permit me to retire, but embraced me. They brought me a golden chair, set it for me, and ensconced me in it. Then Sepedavle turned to me and questioned me about Emir Mumli of

Baghdad and his vassal Amiran Darejanisdze. I told him about both lord and vassal, and he was greatly delighted. Then he questioned me about myself, and, leaving out nothing, I told him everything, and of how I was seeking for battle in order to win renown.

Sepedavle asked me, 'What made you come here? Why did you not fight with Amiran Darejanisdze? He is a man of great fame, and you could have made proof of each other.' I replied, 'By Heaven, I should not have the temerity!' He laughed at that, and said, 'It would seem that you think but lightly of *me*!—Well, no doubt you had but poor entertainment last night!' And then he gave orders for a banquet.

The barons were summoned: they sat down and a feast was spread. Never have my eyes looked on such bowls and goblets as I saw on that table! We ate: Sepedavle presented me with many, countless gifts, and they bestowed fine raiment upon me. A wondrous feast was it we had that day! By God in Heaven, never have I known such banqueting—such goblets and bowls as were set before him and us! Later we were taken off to a second banquet in an inner chamber.—We stayed for a month at the king's court, amid much delight, and every day we banqueted with him;<sup>1</sup> and every day he presented me with many gifts.

One day Sepedavle sent a messenger to me with a summons. When I went before him I found him seated on his throne, clad in a shirt. Two kneeling couriers were addressing him. When I approached he said, 'Omad Amadisdze, you are seeking occasions for prowess, and have come here in order to prove your might. Well, do you see these couriers? Here is the summons they have brought me.<sup>2</sup> If you will accompany me on this quest you will assuredly be put to the proof! And if you win victories we can fight together afterwards.' To this I replied, 'By your head, I will indeed accompany you: but I would fain have my battle with you first!' Then Sepedavle laughed, and said to me, 'Go and put on your armour.'

Rejoicing—for well I knew that he would not kill me—I went off, armed myself, and then came out again. Sepedavle too came

<sup>1</sup> In the text this sentence comes before the two which in the translation immediately precede it.

<sup>2</sup> It seems probable that the couriers' message (? from the Dchen king's daughter: see p. 143, n. 4) should appear here in the text.

out, followed by two attendants—but he had made no preparation, and was sitting on his horse wearing a long coat. Amazed was I that he had not put on any armour!

We repaired to a quiet meadow, and there he said, 'Come now, let us fight!' I said to him, 'Well then, put on some armour!' But he only replied, 'If I do not, why should you worry?' I felt galled, for I felt that he was evincing contempt for me. But I said to myself, 'If I can kill him, or even just unhorse him, great will be the glory I shall win!'

I charged, purposing to strike him on the head with my scimitar. However, when I raised my sword-arm he seized it, lifted me out of my saddle, and dashed me to the ground, breaking my shoulder. Then he began to reproach me, saying, 'How could you think of striking my bare head with your scimitar?' But after that he went on to ask me if I were hurt, and I told him that I thought he had broken my shoulder. He was grieved at this, and said to me, 'By Heaven, I must be a base fellow indeed to have done this to you!' Then he carried me off and placed me in the hands of a physician, who restored me to health.

When this had been done Sepedavle summoned me to the palace and said to me, 'Brother, Heaven knows I feel much ashamed on your account.' Then, after he had presented me with many gifts, he asked me if I would accompany him [on his quest]. I replied, 'By Heaven, indeed I will!' He gave me thanks: 'By God in Heaven, you are a stout and valiant dchabuki, and I am much beholden to you! But it is a very hard road—you would do better not to come, but rather to wait for me here.' To this I replied, 'I must meet my death some day or other: does it matter on which?—I have made up my mind to come.' Sepedavle gave me many thanks, and then turned to the ordering of the affairs of his realm. He appointed worthy men [to act for him while he was away], and gave them all needful directions. Then we set out, with one of the couriers [whose message had summoned him to this quest] accompanying us as guide—Sepedavle Darispanisdze himself; Omar Abramisdze, one of his retainers, and a good dchabuki; and I myself, Omad Amadisdze. King of Kings, may you live for ever!—Give ear, for there is a good story coming now!

(Emir Mumli was listening with delight, but Amiran Darejanisdze was not over-pleased at hearing of such astounding things told in Sepedavle Darispanisdze's praise.)

Here is Sepedavle Darispanisdze's setting forth to carry off the daughter of the Dchen king<sup>1</sup>

And so, guided by that courier, we set out, and presently passed out of Sepedavle's land. We came to a plain, and there we saw a caravan being plundered by brigands. When he saw the evil work they were engaged in, Sepedavle Darispanisdze said, 'Brothers, those wretched brigands must not be allowed to despoil a caravan before our eyes!' With that he charged, and without drawing his scimitar he struck down with his whip<sup>2</sup> three of the best warriors [in the band]. Then the rest fled, terror-stricken.

Now the chief of the caravan and the [rest of the] caravaneers were all liegemen of the Dchen king. The chief recognized Sepedavle, came forward, made obeisance, sang his praises, and said, 'Blessed alike are your prowess and the father who begot you for the common weal of the whole earth!—But for you we should not now be alive.' We halted there for the night, the caravan staying by us.

After the chief of the caravan had bestowed many gifts upon Sepedavle he said to him, 'I already know where you are going, and why you have been to such trouble [to get so far]; but if you will tell me [some more about what you mean to do], perhaps I can be of some help.'<sup>3</sup> Then Sepedavle told him, 'I am going to fetch my betrothed,<sup>4</sup> the daughter of the Dchen king.' The chief of the caravan said, 'I know the roads, and can tell you about them: after that you can make your own decisions, and do as you think best.' And he went on:

'There are two roads to that land: the first has dchabukis standing on guard, among them two good ones of the Dchen land. And there is also one by the name of Doraz, newly come,<sup>5</sup> against whom, so they say, no man on earth could stand in battle. And then [over and above the dchabukis themselves] there are three hosts, each of a thousand picked warriors, one behind the other. However, I

<sup>1</sup> See p. 234, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Tariel's use of his whip in R 94.

<sup>3</sup> Literally, 'perhaps I may know something'.

<sup>4</sup> It may be supposed that the message brought to Sepedavle by the two couriers (see p. 141 text and n. 2) was from the Dchen king's daughter, and that therein she had promised him her hand.

<sup>5</sup> It would be more natural to translate, 'And one of them, by the name of Doraz, is newly come'—but in the event Doraz is encountered separately (see p. 151).

have seen that you are yourself a dchabuki of prowess, and you could go by that way and slaughter them all.—Yet for all that you would be wise not to take that road, for you would give away your approach—[and that you must not do, for] they keep the daughter of our king on a sea-girt island in a castle that human might could never storm.

‘The second road runs through a distant land, thick with great rocks, and if you take it you will be able to keep under cover. This is the Sorcerers’ Road.’

While we were pondering this advice he went on, ‘If you go by this Sorcerers’ Road you will meet with a Lady<sup>1</sup> in Black who knows it well, and she will advise you.’ We decided to take this hard road.

The caravaneers went off home: after sending the courier on ahead to the daughter of the Dchen king we ourselves set out along the hard road. Ten days’ journey brought us to a horrid region in which none of God’s creatures was to be found, and we fell into deep gloom. Then on the eleventh day we came to a fair land, filled with all good things: vines heavy with grapes, shady streams, coolness, and the fruits of the earth. Greatly did we rejoice.

We found a beautiful garden, and halted there until the evening.

Here is Darispanisdze’s meeting with the Lady in Black,  
and her furnishing him with magical substances<sup>2</sup>

Then we saw the Lady in Black coming towards us: very beautiful she was. She came up, made Sepedavle a reverence, sat down by his side, and said to him, ‘Welcome, dchabuki, first among all others!’ Sepedavle replied, ‘Lady, I am likewise glad to see you.’ Then she inquired of us, ‘Why have you come to this harsh and grim land?’ Sepedavle Darispanisdze told her, ‘I have come to fetch my betrothed the daughter of the Dchen king—and I am glad that I have met you.’ She said to him, ‘It is a hard and difficult road you have set out on, one from which none among those who has come here has ever got away unscathed.’ To this Sepedavle replied, ‘By Heaven, no dchabuki like me has ever come here, and, with God helping me, no man can do me hurt—it cannot be!’ Then the Lady said, ‘I have heard of you and your prowess, but I

<sup>1</sup> *Diaci* is usually to be rendered ‘woman’.

<sup>2</sup> *Camali*, here paraphrased as ‘magical substances’, properly means ‘medicine’; ‘remedy’.

find that what they tell of you is less than your deserts! Now I have a boon to crave of you: grant it and I will tell you much that will be of help to you<sup>1</sup> on this road.' Sepedavle Darispanisdze replied, 'Lady, only tell me what it is, and I will assuredly do whatever you desire.' Then she told him, 'Raziman Devi has slaughtered my husband and my brothers and carried off my sons: lend me your aid, and then you will see how much I shall tell you that will be of help to you<sup>2</sup> on this road.' Then Sepedavle said, 'Bring me to him,<sup>3</sup> and then you will see my prowess.'—And after this talk we set out, with the Lady as guide.

Here is the battle of Sepedavle Darispanisdze and  
Raziman Devi

She brought us to a strong castle on a high hill which rose up on a beautiful piece of land. When we came up to it [Raziman's followers] appeared on the castle walls and asked us who we were. We gave them no reply, but they recognized the Lady who had brought us, and went in and told their lord. After a little the castle gates were opened, and Raziman Devi himself came out in full armour and began to abuse the Lady, saying, 'Harlot, are you not sated with the blood of innocent men?' Then she cried out in a loud voice, 'Now I have brought your shepherd:<sup>4</sup> behold him!'

Sepedavle charged: they engaged and had a great battle. For some time neither could overcome the other, but then at length Sepedavle drew off his horse, shouted, 'Now comes the feat of arms with which I shall win my way into the land of the Dchen king!'—charged, and with his scimitar struck the Devi a blow on the head that went deep. Then he struck again and cut the Devi's body into two through the middle, so that the upper part was quite severed from the lower. Well and truly had he killed him! When she saw this the Lady gave a fierce laugh, and said, 'Blessed is the right arm of Sepedavle Darispanisdze!'

We went into the castle, stayed two days, and found treasure beyond reckoning. The Lady searched for her children, found them,

<sup>1</sup> Literally, 'and I will be of great service to you'.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, 'and then you will see of how much service I shall be to you'.

<sup>3</sup> Literally, 'Show him to me . . . '.

<sup>4</sup> This is presumably to be taken as implying a characterization of Raziman as a wolf. *Mcqemsi* has, of course, also the familiar secondary sense of 'priest'.



and returned with them. We made over the castle to her, with all its wealth and treasures, save only some jewels<sup>1</sup> that Sepedavle picked out to take to his bride.

The Lady said, 'Sepedavle, it is through you that I have won my sons back alive.' She gave him many thanks, and then continued, 'It is a hard and difficult road indeed that you have set out on!—Now give good heed and do as I instruct you.

'Three days after setting out from here you will come to a place where of old a river used to flow, as will be clear to you when you see it.<sup>2</sup> It is a day's journey [across the river-bed], and while you are in it two men, both winged, will appear and give a fierce shout—and at their shout a flood like the sea will suddenly come up. To swim through it would be beyond the power of any man, but I shall give you a substance which will enable you to get through it easily and surely, if you smear it over your feet. But I have only a little of it, just enough for one man.

'After you have got through that water you will have a day's journey through a pleasant countryside, and then you will come to a place so dark that you will not be able to see your way. But I will give you a substance to deal with this too: sprinkle it about and there will be light. While you are in this darkness you will meet with a certain man: if you can kill him the darkness will lift [? completely]—but to do that would be a hard task for anyone! After that you will meet with yet another thing fashioned by sorcery, but what manner of thing it is I do not know. Keep this substance<sup>3</sup> which I am going to give you in your own hands: do not give any of it to those others, lest you should not have enough for yourself—no harm will come to them anyway.<sup>4</sup> Once you have passed out of that [region] you will find no further perils on the way. Presently you will enter the land of the emir,<sup>5</sup> but no one will delay you at the entrance to the city. Here is the castle in which the Dchen king's daughter dwells. At the gates stand five hundred picked Arabs, but once you have won your way in there will be no further perils in your path, and you will be able to bring out your bride and carry her off.'

King of Kings, give ear!—The Lady gave us the substances [of

<sup>1</sup> Literally, 'some beautiful things'.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, 'a place to make you say, "of old a river flowed" '.

<sup>3</sup> There is some confusion in the text as to whether the Lady supplies one substance or several.

<sup>4</sup> It is not clear why.

<sup>5</sup> Sc. the Dchen king.

which she had spoken], and we set off. She called after us once more, however, 'What that third thing I told you of may be like I do not know—but beware of it, for it is very dangerous!'

And so we quitted that place and journeyed on to the river-bed. When we had reached it Sepedavle said to us, 'Turn back and wait for me at the castle.' But we replied, 'Better to die with you [if need be] than turn back now!' Then he gave us some of the substance which the Lady had given him to smear over his feet and told me to put it on too. I put it on my feet, and we went forward.

When we had reached the middle [of the river-bed] the winged men appeared and gave a fierce shout—and at their shout a flood like the sea came up. Then Sepedavle put out one arm, took his retainer Omar under it, and started to swim, while I followed behind. Thanks to the substance [given to us by the Lady] I did not sink, while for his part Sepedavle swam the rest of the day's journey<sup>1</sup> [across the river-bed] bearing his retainer Omar along with him. Hugely did I marvel at this feat, which must surely pass man's belief!—We got through that flood safely and found ourselves in a fair countryside: and there we rested for that day.

We went on, and came to the place where there was no seeing the road ahead for darkness. We sprinkled the [second] substance about, and it quickly became light. Then as we looked about we saw a large man sitting with a scimitar in his hands. So fearful was he that just to look at him was horrible enough! He gave a loud, fierce shout, rose, and made for us, crying, 'You have been tricked into [coming to] your deaths!'

When he saw how overbearing and arrogant this man was, Sepedavle Darispanisdze advanced towards him, shouting, 'Someone must have gone to work to deceive *you*, since you think to face Sepedavle—now the hour of your death has come!' Then, saying to us, 'Now, brothers, behold my prowess!'—he closed with the man, and they engaged. By Heaven, a hard battle and fierce was it they had! Then at length Sepedavle drew off his horse, [charged,] and, crying, 'Now I am going to bring light into this land you have darkened!'—struck the man with his scimitar, took off his right shoulder, together with his head, and killed him. Then all became

<sup>1</sup> Literally, 'swam the distance of the until-evening journey'. The Lady in Black has told Sepedavle that the river-bed is a day's journey across.

[? quite] light.<sup>1</sup> We rejoiced greatly, and marvelled at the prowess of Sepedavle.

We set out and journeyed on, and presently we found ourselves in a land so fair that its splendours cannot be told of by the tongue of man. We went into a beautiful garden, which held every kind of loveliness, for its walls were of fine stone, there were marvellous orchards with all kinds of fruit, waters from many springs, leafy and shady trees, and splendidly-built halls.

The folk of the place came up to greet us, made obeisance, and sang our praises.<sup>2</sup> We felt that we had arrived once more in the haunts of men.<sup>3</sup>—We entered the garden, and saw there a baron, richly attired, with a golden turban on his head, and followed by many attendants. When he saw us he made obeisance to Sepedavle, sang his praises, and requested his company: and they sat down together. (But Sepedavle had in his hand that substance<sup>4</sup> which the Lady had given him.)

The baron told his attendants to bring some of the fruits of the garden, and they went off and presently brought back many, which we ate off silver brocades: never has the mouth of man tasted<sup>5</sup> anything like them, so sweet were they! Afterwards they brought [some fruit] which had been lying under a gold-worked fabric upon a golden table standing behind the baron. The baron then proffered it with his own hands to Sepedavle, saying, 'As I am your slave, you have not seen such a fruit as this anywhere before!' It was pleasant to the eye, small and like a melon. Sepedavle took one and passed the rest to us. We ate them—and then knew no more, for we were overcome by sleep, and could do no more than breathe. Sepedavle, however, was not undone: thanks to that substance given him by the Lady, which he had in his hand, he did not lose his senses.

The baron gave a shout, and a host quickly began to pour in. Omar and I fell down, but when Sepedavle saw this he came and stood over the two of us. In such numbers did the warriors come on that it seemed to us that all the warriors of the world must be there. For three days there was very fearful fighting, all of them

<sup>1</sup> It may be suspected that the Lady's magical substance is intrusive in this episode.

<sup>2</sup> The statement 'Many came up, made obeisance to us, and sang our praises' is omitted here as an inadvertent repetition.

<sup>3</sup> In contrast to those of magical devices.

<sup>4</sup> The original distinction of substances has been quite lost sight of.

<sup>5</sup> Literally, 'seen'.

battling with Sepedavle. We for our parts were bereft of strength and could be of no help, but he let none of the enemy get near us. Countless warriors did he slaughter, and at length all that were left fled. When we came to our senses we marvelled at the numbers he had slain—there were ten thousand corpses.

King of Kings, give ear!—We stayed in that garden for three days after that, with much delight. We marvelled at the power of that strange fruit, and searched for another such, but could not find one anywhere. But perhaps it was a work of sorcery. Now had he not had that substance with him, that lion of lions Sepedavle Darispanisdze would have been done to death by those pitiless men.

We went on, and having met with no further perils on the road, reached the land of the Dchen king. We surveyed the capital, which was large and had a castle in the middle of it, then entered the city and found the gateway through which we should have to carry off the maiden. But there was no question of our being able to carry her off by stealth.

And now the courier [sent on ahead by Sepedavle with a message for the daughter of the Dchen king] came up and told Sepedavle, 'Tomorrow she for whose sake you have journeyed here over a road so full of hazards—the daughter of the Dchen king—is going to be taken away by the son of the Arabian king as his betrothed.' Straight away he sent the courier back [to the daughter of the Dchen king with this message]: 'I am going to carry you off tonight—make ready!' Then he told us to bring<sup>1</sup> a camel with a litter to put the maiden in.<sup>2</sup> Then when night had fallen he set us at our post, saying, 'Wait here for me until midnight: if I am still alive I shall be with you by then. Otherwise, make off [when the hour strikes], for they will have killed me.'

He donned armour for foot-fighting, shouted, and broke into [the lodging of] the Arab son-in-law elect, him who had come as the bridegroom of the Dchen king's daughter:<sup>3</sup> and by Your Majesty's head, so easily did he slaughter [the guards] that the townsfolk knew nothing of what was afoot! Those who escaped scattered this way and that. Sepedavle climbed the steps and attacked the Arabs who were standing on guard at the door of the bridegroom's chamber.

<sup>1</sup> Reading *moiqvanet* for *moiqidet*.      <sup>2</sup> Reading *sheshkhmad* for *shesasmelat*.

<sup>3</sup> The story of Tariel's slaying of the son of the King of Khvarazm, the bridegroom-elect of Nestan, his beloved, is clearly inspired by this exploit of Sepedavle's. R 509-42.

Those who were keeping watch over the king's daughter came to meet him as well—by Heaven, a hard and bitter fight did he have! Some he slaughtered, while others contrived to hide themselves. When all was over he went in unscathed: that radiant daughter of the king came forward to meet him and said, 'By Heaven, how glorious<sup>1</sup> even on first seeing do you appear, oh my lion!' He carried off that radiant maiden, and had brought her to us before midnight. We put her in the litter and set out, just as day was breaking.<sup>2</sup>

There was a great stir in the city; but when the townsfolk beheld the slaughtered warriors the fear that we should return and deal with them in like fashion silenced them.

And so we set out on the journey back. Presently Omar and I suggested that we should go back on the same road as we had come; but Sepedavle replied, 'Brothers, in this business there is no room for cowardice!'—After two days we came to the place where the [two] dchabukis<sup>3</sup> with their three thousand warriors were. Having learned in advance of our coming, they had armed themselves and come out to meet us.

Sepedavle said to us and her who was his very life, 'Now, fix your eyes on me, and see in what guise I show myself to you!'—charged and struck down the [first] man [he encountered] with his spear, knocking the life out of him. After that the host fled, terror-stricken, but he pursued them, slaughtered them, and wrought such havoc among them that, by your head, but a bare few narrowly escaped. And yet when all was over he did not seem at all wearied!

We went on, and presently came to a place where there were two thousand men. I said, 'Leave these men to me!'—and Sepedavle told me to go and give them battle. Omar<sup>4</sup> and I went forward, charged fiercely and slaughtered them—although some made good their escape. We returned unscathed, Sepedavle gave us thanks, and we went on.

We came to another place where there were again two thousand men, and Omar said, 'This is *my* battle!' Sepedavle gave his assent, Omar charged, wrought much havoc in his turn, and put the two thousand to flight. He too had quitted himself as became his prowess! Sepedavle gave him thanks likewise, and we went on.

<sup>1</sup> Literally, 'good'.

<sup>2</sup> The time-discrepancy is obvious.

<sup>3</sup> Sc. the 'two good dchabukis' spoken of by the chief of the caravan. See p. 143.

<sup>4</sup> Omar's participation in this exploit is probably the result of a copyist's lapse.

We reached the place where the dchabuki Doraz was, he of whom the Lady in Black had told us.<sup>1</sup> Now this Doraz was wont to boast that there was no dchabuki who could stand against him in battle. He came up to us now and said, 'Which is the one who has dared to carry off the daughter of the Dchen king?—Well, your blood be upon your own head!' <sup>2</sup>

When I saw what an evil-tongued man he was, I said to Sepedavle, 'Now just let me get at this dchabuki, and then see what kind of man I am!' Sepedavle replied, 'I ought to go myself, for if I let you go I run the risk of his killing you—but I can come to your help if need be.'

I charged, we engaged, and had a great battle. Oh King, may you live for ever!—At length I drew off my horse, shouted to Sepedavle, 'Ha! Now watch the blow your follower Omad Amadisdze is going to strike!'—charged, struck Doraz on the helmet with my scimitar, cleft him to the breast, and killed him. Sepedavle gave a fierce laugh and said, 'Upon my father's soul, not ill done!' Then he gave me thanks for my deed, and we went on. As for the other dchabukis in our path, they fled before us in terror.

Now the Dchen king had been told that Sepedavle Darispanisdze had carried off his daughter, slaughtered his host, and destroyed the [guard of] Arabs;<sup>3</sup> and thereupon he had sent a host in pursuit, which now gained rapidly upon us. Whenever a large band came up with us, Sepedavle would himself turn about and give them battle; and when a smaller did so, Omar and I would turn about, slaughter them, and put them to flight. Thus we spent ten days in very fierce combat. By Heaven, Sepedavle Darispanisdze was well pleased with me, but he delighted us still more.

Here is the Dchen king's overtaking of Sepedavle Darispanisdze with a countless host; the great battle that followed and Sepedavle's slaying of the bridegroom, the son of the Arabian king; the arrival of the champion Rosab; Sepedavle's great battle with [Rosab's] unicorn and with Rosab himself; and his vanquishing of both

At length the Dchen king himself came up with us, accompanied

<sup>1</sup> The informant in fact was the chief of the caravan. See p. 143.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, 'neck'.

<sup>3</sup> Reading *arabni* for *abashni* ('Abyssinians').

by a fearful host which was beyond counting. When we had taken the full measure of it, Sepedavle said, 'By Heaven, brothers, this battle is going to be nothing to joke about!—Now you go over there with my [betrothed] wife, and leave me to decide the outcome here.' And so we went off some distance with her.

We fought in the same fashion as before. Whenever a large band of warriors came up, Sepedavle would go forward, slaughter and rout them, and then return: whenever a small one came, he had Omar and me repulse them, while he himself stayed with his [betrothed] wife to watch over her. Fierce was the battle! We had a fortnight of it—and by Your Majesty's head, in all that time we never saw Sepedavle weaken: far from that, each day he fought more fiercely.

At length the Dchen king called off his host, came forward himself, and said to Sepedavle, 'What made you slaughter my host and force your way into my castle, my capital, and my realm? Did you not understand that you could not carry off my daughter with impunity?'

To this Sepedavle replied, 'You are a great king—and yet, even although your daughter was my [betrothed] wife, and I was [to be] your son, you meant to deprive me of her and to give her in marriage to another! Did *you* not understand that you could not thus deny my wife to me?—If you are strong enough, let your host [continue to] fight with me; or let this new bridegroom try to take her from me!'

At these words the Arabian king's son, the betrothed of that star [the daughter of the Dchen king], rode forward and shouted, 'Here I am, Sepedavle Darispanisdze! Now I am going to show you up for what you are before your wife, so that she can decide whether she did well to cast in her lot with yours and to prefer you to me!'

The Dchen king said, 'Let them [fight]!'—whereupon Sepedavle said to his [betrothed] wife, 'My soul, watch now, and you will see what manner of dchabuki your betrothed is!' And he charged, without drawing his scimitar.

When Sepedavle came up, the son of the Arabian king struck him with his scimitar, but wounded him only slightly. Sepedavle seized hold of him, wrenched him from his saddle, dashed him to the ground, killed him right in front of the Dchen king, then cried out, 'A poor king he who could prefer that man to me as a son-in-law!'

Much grieved, the Dchen king shouted to his host, 'Ho! Throw yourselves upon him!' And then did the fiercest of all battles take place! We joined in to help Darispanisdze—not indeed because he was quitting himself poorly, but because he had been swallowed up in the host.

Presently we caught sight of a certain champion of the king's by the name of Rosab. He had not been with the host from the first, but the king had sent him a summons—and now he was rapidly approaching. This champion Rosab had bred up a unicorn and trained it to go into battle with him: and now when the clarions sounded he came up, leading his unicorn through the host.

When the king saw him he cried out, 'Let him go forward, and then he and they can fight it out!' Emir of Emirs, give ear!—Had you seen him, by your head you would have said, 'There can be none who excels this champion Rosab!'—And we were the more terrified because now, after many days of fighting, Sepedavle was worn out.

As soon as Rosab saw Sepedavle he shouted to him, 'Why did you slaughter the great king's warriors [in the city] and the [guard of] Arabs,<sup>1</sup> and then steal out like a thief?—And now which way can you turn to escape me?'

When Rosab had uttered these words the unicorn bore down on the radiant lady, and Rosab himself on Sepedavle. As the unicorn approached the lady to seize her Sepedavle charged it—but as he turned away from Rosab he shouted to him, 'I am first going to finish off this unicorn, and after that I will have time for you—I will make you acquainted with the play of my arm!'

The unicorn lowered its head, purposing to bear the lady off upon it—but then Sepedavle, in hot haste to get at Rosab, struck the beast with his scimitar, and by Your Majesty's head, he cleft it clean through.

While he was making an end of it Omar and I charged Rosab, and he bore down on us likewise. Emir of Emirs, false speech and empty boasting ill become a dchabuki—he struck terror into our hearts, and we fled!

Rosab overtook me, but instead of striking me with his scimitar, he lifted me out of my saddle and then hurled me at Omar—and so got us both down on the ground.

When Sepedavle saw our sorry plight, he was concerned, charged up, and shouted to Rosab, 'Brother, what wrong had

<sup>1</sup> Once more reading *arabni* for *abashni*: cf. p. 151, n. 3.



these done?—If you are a true dchabuki, make proof of me, make trial of my prowess!' Then they shouted at each other and charged. Their blows fell on [each other's] armour like the thunder in the heavens, so wondrously fierce was their fighting! They fought for a long time, while the Dchen king and the host kept crying out, 'Take vengeance for all those men he has slaughtered!' Excitement ran high amid the warriors, and still the battle continued, marvelous and fierce.

At length the Dchen king shouted to his champion, Rosab, 'Vanquish Sepedavle, and I will give you my radiant daughter to wife!' But Sepedavle retorted to him, 'If he survives my blows you can give him your own wife as well, if you like!'

Now the radiant lady bade us open up the litter, and we opened the door. Sepedavle looked over, saw the queen his [betrothed] wife gazing on him—and called out to her, 'Daughter of yonder king, see now what manner of dchabuki is this champion of your father's!' And with that he charged fiercely, struck the champion on the helmet with his scimitar, and by Your Majesty's head, cleft him to the breast and killed him!

When the Dchen king saw this, he gave this order to the host: 'Hold back! None of you is to venture anything further!' And then he said to Sepedavle, 'From this day forward you will be my son, and I shall be your father. Since God has endued you with such prowess I will make you heir to my realm.' Then the whole host dismounted, made obeisance to Sepedavle, and sang his praises.

Sepedavle said to the Dchen king, 'Oh King, you have wronged me, but I will say no more of that: henceforward I will be your liegeman—and a better son-in-law than I you could not find.' Then they made each other a reverence, and embraced.

The Dchen king invited Sepedavle to his realm, but he would not go, saying, 'First I must take my radiant one to my own home.' The king replied, 'Do as you will: that and this realm of mine are alike yours: sojourn in either as you may choose.' Sepedavle thanked him for these words, and after that they took their ease. The Dchen king bestowed countless treasures upon Sepedavle, and gave Omar and me many presents [as well], and bestowed rich raiment upon us.

The following day, rejoicing and triumphant, we set out upon our road back. We journeyed on, and presently we came to the castle [which had belonged to Raziman Devi]. The Lady in Black

—she who had helped our journey—came out to meet us, bringing with her her two fine sons. She was clad in raiment far different from that in which we<sup>1</sup> had seen her before; in cloth of gold. She came up, made obeisance, and said, ‘Never did I think that you<sup>2</sup> would return [? safe and sound]—but since, free and triumphant, you have in truth, I, who owe my very life to you, offer my fealty as your servant.’ And she sang [Sepedavle’s] praises.—And there we rested.

The following day we set out again. The Lady bestowed upon Sepedavle a garment such as the eye of man has never seen: it had jewels, one on the breast and another on the shoulder, that shone at night like candles—and it was covered all over with jewels and pearls. [She gave him also] a crown with jewels set in it whose worth could be guessed by no man, and a steed that was second to none. Sepedavle gave her thanks such as her generosity deserved. Then she bestowed upon the queen a garment which was yet more splendid than that given to Sepedavle, and which had still finer jewels. Next she presented a necklace<sup>3</sup> of jewels and pearls—none who saw it could put a price to it. Both Sepedavle and his queen gave her their thanks. And when we set out we brought the Lady along with us.

We journeyed on, and presently arrived at Darispanshaar. The whole land, the barons and the commons of the realm alike, came to meet us. Rejoicing was there, and feasting, song, and gaiety. The following day Sepedavle and his queen donned the garments given them by the Lady in Black, placed the crown upon their own heads, and seated themselves upon a throne. Had you beheld them you would have said, ‘Never has such a bridal pair<sup>4</sup> been seen!’ They treated the Lady in Black as a sister, and said to her, ‘Lady, it is through you that all this good fortune has come about!’ Emir of Emirs, by your head, no bounds were there to the revelry and rejoicing! And Sepedavle bestowed gifts upon all in due measure.

At last they sent the Lady on her way: Sepedavle gave her many presents, and said, ‘I make a grant of the Devi’s lands to you and your children. Should I ever have need of warriors they must fight for me: with this condition the lands are yours, for I look upon you as a mother.’ Then the Lady made obeisance, and went off.

<sup>1</sup> Reading *gvenakha* for *genakha*.

<sup>2</sup> *Mogelodi* is to be disregarded.

<sup>3</sup> Reading *p’argulni* for *p’ardulni*.

<sup>4</sup> More literally, ‘young people’ (*naqopni*).

We spent some time with Sepedavle and his queen, and then I asked leave to depart. Sepedavle told me that if I would stay with him he would give me rich rewards, but I would not. I said, 'To be with you gives me more happiness than does anything else, but I cannot be false to my own lord, and to him I must go.'<sup>1</sup> Then he gave me, too, countless splendid presents, such as were worthy of his majesty, and many camels, mules, and attendants. I loaded up my numberless treasures, set off—and so now come to be before Your Majesty.

Emir Mumli gave Omad Amadisdze thanks for his story. Amiran Darejanisdze, for his part, was irked by all this praise of Sepedavle. However, he said nothing. And so we separated.

Later, with this story in his mind, Amiran Darejanisdze summoned us and said, 'If there is indeed such a man upon the earth I must not fail to see him!' We tried to dissuade him, saying, 'You are so great a dchabuki that there is not another like you upon the face of all the earth: so why should you want to go and see him?' But Amiran replied, 'No brothers! For whenever two men foregather there will be talk of my deeds and of his: my friends will claim that I excel him, and my enemies will maintain that he could outmatch me—and the question will stir up dissension upon the earth!' And we could not turn him from his purpose of going off to fight Sepedavle. His lord Emir Mumli tried likewise to dissuade him, but with no more success.

Amiran set the affairs of his household in order, appointed men to attend to them, and issued all needful instructions. Then he said to Omad Amadisdze, 'Be my guide, and let us set out.'

Here is Amiran Darejanisdze's setting out to see  
Sepedavle Darispanisdze, and their great battles

King of Kings, give ear!—Off we went: Amiran Darejanisdze himself; I, Savarsamidze; Aban Kabanisdze; Ali Momadisdze; Asan Badridze; Qamar Qamareli; and Kowos Kosidze, taking along with us Omad Amadisdze. We journeyed for a month, and then when we were approaching Sepedavle's realm, Omad Amadisdze went on ahead and told Sepedavle of Amiran Darejanisdze's coming. Sepedavle rejoiced beyond measure and came out a day's

<sup>1</sup> In the text the accounts of the departures of the Lady in Black and of the narrator are entangled.

journey to meet us, followed by his barons, in great pomp and splendour and in magnificent attire. When we saw Sepedavle we were delighted—for in very truth what they told of the man did him less than justice!<sup>1</sup> Greatly did he rejoice at our coming.

Amiran Darejanisdze made to dismount to give him greeting, but Sepedavle would not allow this, and so they saluted each other from their horses. They gave each other greeting and rejoiced much over their meeting. Then Sepedavle turned to us and gave us a gracious<sup>2</sup> welcome, such as befitted one so valiant.

We went on, and presently arrived at Darispanshaar. We saw the splendour of the city, its size, its beauty, its splendid buildings—truly its riches could not be described by the tongue of man! We entered Sepedavle's palace and dismounted. Omad Amadisdze had told us of the splendour of the palace and of the rich array of the barons and attendants; but against our coming the palace had been decked out yet more sumptuously, and the barons and attendants even more richly attired than he had described them to us. Never have greater splendour or riches been seen by the eye of man! Greatly did we marvel.

Fine halls had been made ready, and stewards, chamberlains, attendants, and cooks appointed to prepare everything for each of us severally,<sup>3</sup> as was the wonted way there; and a table was spread for Darejanisdze no less sumptuous than that of Sepedavle himself.<sup>4</sup> Sepedavle divided his treasure into halves and presented one to Amiran Darejanisdze. The queen too dispatched officers to lay separate tables.

Sepedavle said, 'Do not spare my treasury!—One day we shall be entertained by you, the next you by me!' And so we passed the time in hunting and taking our ease. Sepedavle divided the minstrels, tumblers, clarioneers, taborers, and other musicians into two equal companies, one to attend on us, the other on himself. On the first day he feasted with us; then on the second he summoned us to go to him. Countless were the gifts exchanged then between Amiran and Sepedavle! And when we had made an end of feasting

<sup>1</sup> Literally, 'for the man excelled the report'.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, 'modest'.

<sup>3</sup> This individual attention being, of course, the measure of the luxury of the entertainment.

<sup>4</sup> In the text this last statement appears in direct speech as a command from Sepedavle: 'Spread a table for Darejanisdze no less sumptuous than our [*pluralis maiestatis*] own.'

there was such singing, revelry, and gaiety as cannot be told of by the tongue of man. On the third day the queen summoned us: even greater was our gaiety and delight, and we were given presents beyond counting. So it went on: the diversions of each day were surpassed by the delights of the one following—and then those of the day after that would be still more splendid.

Oh King, may you live for ever! Only you, the Indian king, or Emir Mumli of Baghdad might possess such wondrous jewel-encrusted bowls and goblets as those I saw on Sepedavle's table—no other monarch than you two! And for two months we enjoyed such pleasures.

Now both Amiran and Sepedavle were eager to have battle; but because of the affection that had grown up between them, neither could steel himself to raise the matter. Amiran Darejanisdze thought within himself, 'The first challenge cannot come from me, since he has spent such boundless sums on lavish entertainment!' And Sepedavle on his side was thinking, 'I want to fight with Amiran Darejanisdze, but perhaps if I were to speak of combat he would say to himself, "He has laid out great sums, and this has given him a grudge against me!"' And so neither the one nor the other raised the question. Everyone knew what each was saying in private, but no one dared to report the words of one to the other. So matters stood during a further month, in which we continued to enjoy the most magnificent and splendid feasts. Then at length Kowos Kosidze declared, 'I am going to bring those two to battle by putting an end to those perplexities that they entertain about each other.' And at these words Amiran Darejanisdze said, 'Kowos Kosidze, I would indeed have you say something to him!'

Now Kowos Kosidze was a man of lively wit, and Sepedavle Darispanisdze had taken a great liking to him. So one day as we sat feasting, while minstrels sang, he rose, took two goblets, went and knelt before Amiran and Sepedavle, who were sitting together, filled the goblets, gave one to the one, the other to the other, and said, 'Drink off this wine, both of you—this wine of which you both are fond: but now the time has come to do battle together<sup>1</sup>—and that will be no less to your taste!<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the manner in which Abram enjoins battle upon Mze Dchabuki and Amarindo, below, p. 186.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, 'that will end in the same way!' The fighting will be enjoyed as much as, and be no more dire in its outcome than, a drinking-bout.

Sepedavle laughed and said, 'You are for all the world like the commander of an army [with your peremptory speech]!' Amiran laughed also, and they began to jest together. Sepedavle said, 'Amiran Darejanisdze, I am certain that you put him up to this!' And Amiran replied, 'No, by your head—he is just a meddling knave!' But to be short, after this talk the heroes came to a decision and determined upon battle. Sepedavle said, 'I shall let you know what weapons we shall fight with.' [And Amiran replied,] 'Yes, by Heaven,—whichever you may choose.'

When the queen heard what was afoot she was much grieved, and her anger rose against Kowos Kosidze. But there was nothing she could do.

After the heroes had determined upon combat, they gave orders for the erection of tents of cloth of gold the following morning, and four<sup>1</sup> large ones were put up—two on the one hand, two on the other. One of [each pair of] these tents was for banqueting, the other was to serve as a bed-chamber; and they stood on a fine maidan.

The barons also were divided into two companies: half of them were put on our side, half on the other. We were divided up likewise: Sepedavle took away Ali Momadisdze, Qamar Qamareli, and Kowos Kosidze: the rest of us—[me,] Savarsamidze, Aban Kabanisdze, and Asan Badridze—our lord kept by him. Sepedavle also took Omad Amadisdze, but sent us Omar, his stout retainer and dchabuki. The clarioners and taborers had already been divided.<sup>2</sup>

Sepedavle apprised Amiran of this rule: 'If you come off best I will have you to feast with me, and will bestow gifts upon you; and if I do, you must do the same for me.'

When we went off to the maidan we did not have the queen with us, for she was grieved over the battle. All of us were distressed too—but what could we do? We were the more unhappy because we knew that the battle in which those peerless dchabukis engaged would be a fearful one indeed. And now Sepedavle selected steeds, passed over a hundred to Amiran Darejanisdze, and kept a hundred for himself. Then he sent across this message: 'Tomorrow we shall have spear-fighting.'

The following morning they each had twenty steeds saddled, and then they mounted and came out on to the maidan. Then

<sup>1</sup> Reading *ot'khni* for *ot'akhni*.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 157.

they engaged. Whenever Sepedavle killed one of Amiran's horses and so got him to the ground he would pause, while those on his side made a tumult with their clarions and tabors: and whenever Darejanisdze killed one of Sepedavle's and so got him to the ground, he would pause, while we made a tumult with our clarions and tabors in the same way.<sup>1</sup> That day Sepedavle killed all twenty of Amiran's horses, but Amiran Darejanisdze killed only fifteen of Sepedavle's: and so victory that day rested with Sepedavle. Great as was Amiran's skill in spear-fighting, yet greater was Sepedavle's! That day he came to banquet with us, and a feast was spread. Amiran bestowed many gifts upon him, and after that we separated, King of Kings, give ear!—By Your Majesty's head, to see them fighting together was something indeed!<sup>2</sup>

For the second day they each had forty horses got ready: they engaged, and Amiran killed all forty [of Sepedavle's] horses, but Sepedavle killed only thirty [of Amiran's]: and so victory that day rested with Darejanisdze. Sepedavle summoned us to a banquet, feasted us, and bestowed countless gifts upon us. To be short—while they were each of them working through their hundred steeds sometimes one would come off best and sometimes the other. They had agreed beforehand not to make any use of the bow, and all their fighting was done with scimitar, flail, long-sword, or spear. But we could not tell which would win [in the end].

King of Kings, admire<sup>3</sup> the courtesy of Sepedavle's barons! When Darejanisdze was coming off best they must assuredly have felt grief in their hearts—yet they looked as though they were delighted!

Presently the queen sent a man down to us with this message: 'There has been enough—stop their fighting!' We would indeed have liked to part them and put an end to their combat, but although each of them had by now wounded the other, they were still bent on continuing. King of Kings, give ear!—Disputes arose after a time, some declaring that one was coming off the better, some the other. And there was much ill-feeling.

At length harsh words passed between Sepedavle and Amiran during a feast, Amiran Darejanisdze said, 'I have been staying with you for a long time now, and I want to go home. So far our fighting

<sup>1</sup> It seems necessary to translate this passage in a frequentative sense, although in the text the verbs are in the aorist.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, 'was enough'.

<sup>3</sup> Literally, 'behold!'

has been paltry child's-play—horse-slaughter! Now we must have a decision!' To this Sepedavle replied, 'Brother, you have been entertained as my guest: had you not spoken in this fashion I for my part should not have said anything, lest you might think that I was weary of having you with me.—Now let us do as you say and have a decision: idle chatter<sup>1</sup> ill becomes dchabukis.'

Then they agreed to have a battle in dead earnest on the following day, and separated.

Here is the last, fierce battle of Sepedavle Darispanisdze  
and Amiran Darejanisdze, and the final outcome of their  
combat

We were grieved to think that one or other might be killed, or that the one vanquished might feel rancour and that the happiness we had known until now might vanish—but there was no way of stopping them.

In the half-light of morning they sounded clarions and tabors at Sepedavle Darispanisdze's door, and out he came on a white steed. He had put on a breastplate over the weak places and covered both his own and his horse's head with mail.<sup>2</sup> His horse's chest and flanks were also [protected by mail]. He had three sharp scimitars with him: one he had attached to the [horse's] loins, another he had put at its shoulders, and the third he had fixed to the saddle. Had you seen him you would have said, 'By your head, never has such a man as this been seen!'—And we dreaded that he might be victorious.

He halted in the middle of the maidan, silenced the clarioneers, and said to them, 'Tell Amiran Darejanisdze that it is good for dchabukis to fight early in the day.' And then he began to move about in idle fashion. Then the clarioneers went and sounded their clarions at Amiran Darejanisdze's door. He came out at once, armed in the same fashion as Sepedavle—and had you seen them you would have said, 'Never before can God have created two such men!' By Your Majesty's head, we could not make up our minds which excelled.

They circled round each other at the gallop, charged and engaged. Their fighting was like the crashing together of great rocks, the flash and strokes of their scimitars like the thunder in the

<sup>1</sup> Reading *dalaqbeba* for *dalba*.

<sup>2</sup> *Čabalakhi*, properly 'mail coif', is elsewhere rendered 'helmet'.



heavens! They fought for a long time: each shattered his [first] scimitar upon the other, then drew a second and charged once more. But for all the blows they rained down on each other we could not see any weakening in either.

King of Kings, many a time have I seen Darejanisdze in battle, and never in all my days have I set eyes on his equal—but never have I known him as furious as he was then! And Omar, Sepedavle's retainer, said that never had he seen Sepedavle so enraged either. The battle lasted for a long time: each shivered his second scimitar and drew his third—and then, by your head, they engaged [yet again], still more fiercely! Amazed were we that with such fury neither horses nor men had yet weakened.

At length Sepedavle Darispanisdze drew off his horse, called out, 'Amiran Darejanisdze, now I am going to prove you for a dchabuki!'—then wheeled about, shouted, [charged,] struck Amiran with his scimitar upon the left shoulder, cleaving through breastplate and mail. His blow went deep, and blood gushed out. In a loud voice he shouted [to Amiran], 'Dismount [and admit yourself defeated]!'

When we heard the sound of his blow, like the thunder in the heavens, we were distressed—for we thought that Sepedavle had surely triumphed. Amiran Darejanisdze, however, drew off his horse swiftly, then turned about and charged down hard. Rising in his stirrups, he struck Sepedavle on the helmet with his scimitar, cleft it through<sup>1</sup> and cut deeply into his head, so that blood gushed out from him too. The scimitar was shivered with the force of the blow.

Kings of Kings, when Darejanisdze's scimitar came to pieces, Sepedavle acted basely; for, neither dropping his own nor allowing Amiran time to get his hands on another, he drew off his horse and then charged down fiercely. As he came close he rose [in his stirrups] to strike—but just as he was about to deal him a blow over the head Amiran Darejanisdze closed with him, seized his sword-arm, gripped it firmly, pulled him forward and forced him to drop his scimitar. Then they seized hold of each other: locked together they strained this way and that,<sup>2</sup> but neither could get the other down.

<sup>1</sup> The words *orni polotikni* (*r*)*kineni*, which occur here in the text, are disregarded.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the wrestling-bouts in *Shāhnāma* (W), ii, pp. 170, 172-3; iii, pp. 262-4; iv, pp. 49-50.

Then we all of us went up to them and said, 'Why should you fight together like this? God has made good dchabukis of you both—why slaughter each other?' They listened to us and separated, and we all rejoiced that such heroes should part without [mortal] harm. The victory rested with Darejanisdze, since he had forced Sepedavle to drop his raised scimitar. For, though Sepedavle said, 'I let it go of my own accord, or else why did you not unhorse me when you pulled me before that?'—he was lying, for it was indeed Amiran's grip that had made him drop it.

Then amid much rejoicing they went into the city, dismounted, and went into the royal palace to banquet. Many feasts did they have, and they became good friends [? once more]. Darejanisdze said many times over, 'Never have I seen a dchabuki like Sepedavle!' And Sepedavle praised Amiran, saying, 'Thanks be to God that He has spared me to see this dchabuki!' Then they swore oaths of brotherhood. The queen for her part offered up thanks to Heaven for their both having come through unharmed, gave boundless alms to the poor, and made great benefactions to the mosque in which she was wont to pray. King of Kings, give ear!—Two months passed before Sepedavle would let us go, and during all this time there was boundless gaiety, feasting, and hunting. The tongue cannot tell of all the delights we enjoyed then! No further thought of battle was there in the minds of Amiran and Sepedavle. Darispanisdze would have liked to keep us with him for a whole year, but we would not stay.

Sepedavle gave us many presents, and the queen did so too. She gave Darejanisdze for Lady Khuareshan the garment she had been given by the Lady [in Black], of which Omad Amadisdze had spoken so highly, and the like of which had never been seen; also the necklace [given by the Lady].<sup>1</sup> She sent also this message: 'Now that our lords have become brothers, let us be sisters!'<sup>2</sup> Upon us too, the followers of Amiran, they bestowed gifts. Sepedavle gave us camels, mules, and attendants: he had the mules and camels loaded up with countless treasures, and these we took away with us.<sup>3</sup>

King of Kings, give ear: may you live for ever!—When we left

<sup>1</sup> See p. 155. The usual meaning of *kubasti* is 'veil'. There is doubtless some confusion.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the oath of sisterhood sworn between T'inat'in and Nestan. R 1544.

<sup>3</sup> The passage in the text represented by this paragraph is confused.

Darispanshaar Sepedavle accompanied us for a day's journey. Before he left us Amiran and he exchanged oaths to see each other whenever they could, and to go one to the help of the other should ill fortune come. Sepedavle grieved at the parting, and so did we. Our talk was all of him, and we had no room in our hearts for thought of anything else.

One of Sepedavle's barons accompanied us<sup>1</sup> to the borders of his realm. Wherever we made a halt the people came out to greet us as they would their own lord—there were no bounds to the gifts and delights! Amiran bestowed great gifts upon the baron when he prepared to turn back at the point where we passed out of the realm. We journeyed on: a long way to Baghdad was it from Darispanshaar!

While we were crossing a great plain we saw a man with an ashen face coming swiftly towards us. When he had come up to us he made obeisance to Amiran Darejanisdze and said, 'I see that you are but few: no doubt you put trust in your valour—but here in front of you is Antrakavidze,<sup>2</sup> a lion-dchabuki with a host so huge that it is beyond counting. Antrakavidze himself is such a dchabuki that no one has ever yet been able to stand against him in battle. You would do well to make off quickly!'

We inquired who this Antrakavidze was, and where he came from. [The ashen man] replied, 'I have heard tell of his valour and of the numbers of his host, and I have also seen him—a magnificent-looking man he is. But beyond that I know nothing about him. Do not go along this way: there is another which is quite safe—take that!' Then he bade us farewell and went off.

Now we were in great distress—because, while it seemed cowardly to go round the other way, the size of the host made it a perilous matter to continue along the one we were on, having as we did nothing to aid us other than the valour of those men [sent along with us by Sepedavle].

In the end we decided to continue upon this road [we were on], and after we had gone on for a little we came upon a caravan which had been plundered. Truly the wrath of God had been brought down upon it—[so many] had been slaughtered!

When they saw us coming the caravaneers cried out to us, 'Who are you?—Antrakavidze is over there, in your path, with a countless host, and, unless you are of them, they will slaughter you!' But

<sup>1</sup> Reading *gvqva* for *gqva*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ant'arak'avidze*.

Kowos Kosidze replied, 'They will not undo us as they have you, by Heaven! We are going to give them battle: follow on behind us and see if they slaughter us!'

When Kowos Kosidze said this the caravan burst out all together in clamour and fell in behind us. We went on, and presently caught sight of a host beyond counting.

When they saw us advancing, the host took us for the caravaneers' escort come to give them battle, and a shout went up from among them. While they advanced to give battle we put on our armour, and then charged. What with their numbers and our prowess it was a fierce enough struggle. King of Kings, give ear!—Had you seen Darejanisdze then you would have said, 'By Heaven, there can be no other man like him!'

As the battle wore on men began to fly from the host, and they told the lion-dchabuki Antrakavidze, 'Some dchabukis have come, and, though there are only a few of them, they are destroying our host!' Then Antrakavidze mounted and came up, armed with a mace.<sup>1</sup> He was angry with his host, made them fall back, and said to them, 'Were you not ashamed to fall upon a small company in such great numbers?' Then he came towards us and called out, 'Who are you, brothers, and from what land do you come?' We replied, 'We are from Baghdad: had we been seeking battle we should not have set out with so few men!'

Then Antrakavidze ordered his host to retire, came up to us himself with only a few men, and engaged in talk with us.—A very good dchabuki he looked. Although we had killed many of his host that day he only said, 'You have slaughtered my host, but I do not hold that against you. Since they on encountering you as you journeyed along made an attack, it was but natural for you to do so. So I give you passage—and now go!'

Here is Amiran Darejanisdze's battle with Antrakavidze

But then, looking at Amiran Darejanisdze and seeming to admire his appearance, he said to him, 'Great dchabuki, you please me well! For myself, let me tell you that I have carried off Arer, the daughter of the Indian king. I am seeking battle—no one has ever proved himself my equal in combat, and I am looking for one who will challenge me and succeed in withstanding me. Now, if

<sup>1</sup> *Argani* is usually to be translated 'stick'.

you dare, fight with me: for, by Heaven, you are huge of stature and have been given the build of a dchabuki.—And yet it is true that size is not the same as prowess!’

At this Amiran Darejanisdze laughed and replied, ‘I have a long life behind me, but never until now have I seen battle! Still, since you wish it, let me prove myself.—Who knows? It may be that I shall quit myself well, and so not go to my grave without having won any renown!’

Antrakavidze said, ‘If you have [never] until now fought any battles you must assuredly be a coward, for you could have had many had you had the courage!’ With that he turned his back and moved off—but Darejanisdze called after him, ‘Why are you going away? Why will you not fight with me? However much of a coward I may be, is it beyond my deserts to fight, wound, and unhorse men?’

Antrakavidze laughed and replied, ‘Miserable wretch! Perhaps you would bring disgrace upon yourself by proving unable to stand up to my blows—I should kill you and then feel sorry for you!’ But now Amiran Darejanisdze said, ‘I have no relish for word-spinning!—This caravan is mine, and you have plundered it! If you do not return everything to me, I will do as much damage to you as you and your host have done to it!’

Enraged by these words, Antrakavidze said to the dchabukis about him, ‘Pull them off their horses and bring them before me on foot!’ The dchabukis charged—and at that Amiran Darejanisdze said to us, ‘Do not let a single one get away!’ So we charged too, and at the first onset we overthrew and slaughtered them all. At this Antrakavidze became yet more enraged, and, riding up, he abused Darejanisdze, saying, ‘Come forward yourself and let us fight!’ And Darejanisdze did so. The word ran through the host that the dchabukis were about to join battle, and, countless, all moved forward. Antrakavidze, however, said to them, ‘Stand back: this man and I are going to do battle together—he is truly fine to look upon, and he brags of his prowess!’ Then they charged and fought for a long time.

At length Ali Momadisdze said to Darejanisdze, ‘This man had some ground for despising you—for you do not seem to be your wonted self!’ At these words Amiran drew off his horse, said, ‘Ali Momadisdze, his blood be upon your head!’<sup>1</sup>—[charged,] struck

<sup>1</sup> Literally, ‘neck’.

Antrakavidze upon the helmet with his scimitar, and, by Your Majesty's head, cleft him to the breast and killed him!

Antrakavidze's host fled straight away, but Amiran would not let us pursue them, saying, 'What wrong have they done?' Some of them scattered, but others presently [came up and] made obeisance.

When we went into Antrakavidze's camp we found treasures beyond counting. To our great delight, on entering his gold-brocaded tent we found the radiant daughter of the Indian king. Darejanisdze rejoiced, determined to make her his wife,<sup>1</sup> and married her.

We spent the day there in the camp. Some of the [dead] dchabuki's captains came and said they would take service with us, but the greater number asked leave to depart, and we let them go. Then the caravaneers came up, sang Amiran's praises, and said, 'Our lucky star it was that brought you<sup>2</sup> here!—Will you let us have back what he took from us?' And Amiran gave them all that they laid claim to: from among all that treasure we kept back a few jewels and pearls, but everything else we returned. Then they departed, well satisfied, and we set out for Baghdad.

Emir Mumli of Baghdad learned [of our approach] and came out to meet us, rejoicing greatly over Amiran Darejanisdze's return. Amiran presented him with splendid gifts from that land [whence we had come], and Emir Mumli bestowed great gifts upon him likewise. Here ends the chapter of Sepedavle Darispanisdze: may God increase the splendour of Your Majesty's reign, Amen.

<sup>1</sup> Reading *mari* (see Chubinov, col. 672) for *shahiri*.

<sup>2</sup> Reading *mogiqvanat* for *mogviqvana*.

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*The Story of Mze Dchabuki*<sup>1</sup>


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King of Kings, give ear: may you live for ever! May God prosper your friends and bring confusion upon those who are false to you!—Once Amiran Darejanisdze went out to hunt with a white hawk on his wrist.<sup>2</sup> Presently a partridge rose up, Amiran loosed the hawk, and it brought the partridge down. Being fond of the hawk, Amiran dismounted and went to its help.<sup>3</sup>

While he was standing at the edge of a reed-bed two lions came out from it, one after the other.<sup>4</sup> Amiran flung himself upon the first, struck it with his scimitar and killed it—then flung himself in the same way upon the second, seized hold of it, got it by the throat, and killed it too. By Your Majesty's head, he killed them like cats! We were filled with admiration, and sang his praises.

Then a man came up who was as black as pitch: not only was he clad in black but his face had been blackened<sup>5</sup> too. When he saw the dead lions he leapt quickly off his horse, began to wail aloud, tore his hair and beard, and poured ashes<sup>6</sup> over his head—it was for all the world as though the wrath of God had struck him!

We were amazed to see such wretched antics, and thinking he must have gone mad in mourning,<sup>7</sup> we went up and asked him, 'Who are you, brother? Why do you sit down to weep here in this desolate place—or what were these lions to you that you should weep so over their deaths?'

<sup>1</sup> Literally, 'the Sun Dchabuki'.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, 'hand'.

<sup>3</sup> Why the hawk should be in need of help is quite obscure. The text is clearly defective. Cf., however, p. 175.

<sup>4</sup> Literally, 'came out from it, one in front'.

<sup>5</sup> Literally, 'his face was black'.

<sup>6</sup> A biblical echo.

<sup>7</sup> Interpreting the obscure *abela* to mean 'mourner' (Hebrew *abel*: see Orbeliani, p. 3, *abel*, and n. 3). The obvious translation of the words *kheli abela* is, however, 'the mad Abela'. Conceivably the meaning is 'a mad Abelite'; sc. a member of a sect in North Africa which apparently practised continence in marriage. See St. Augustine, *De Haeresibus*, chap. 87.

He replied, 'It is not the slaughter of these lions I am weeping over: but I used to know a man—I was his retainer indeed—who once when he was out hunting slaughtered lions like these. And many times have I seen him perform other such feats. [This sight] put me in mind of his prowess, and that is why I am weeping.' Scarcely could he get the words through his tears. We felt pity for him and were grieved at his weeping.

We put him on his horse and went off home, taking him with us. Then when we had eaten and the feast was ended, Amiran Darejanisdze told us to bring him before him.

We brought him in, and Amiran said to him, 'Sit down and tell me about this man [of whom you were speaking]—who he was, what he did, and what adventures he had.' The man replied, 'His story is a long one and his deeds were great: if you will not be wearied and will hear me out I will tell you of all his feats—but otherwise do not force me to speak.' Amiran said to him, 'Now tell me all, from beginning to end, leaving out nothing!' Then he had him sit down, and bade us be seated likewise. And the man began.

King of Kings, may you live for ever!<sup>1</sup>—First let me tell you that my name is Raïb, and that I am a Nogai.<sup>2</sup> Arabs carried me off as a captive when I was a child, and I grew up in Arabia. I took to brigandage, and when my skill in battle had ripened there was no man in the trade a better dchabuki than I.

Now there were three Arab brigands,<sup>3</sup> lion-dchabukis, with three thousand picked warriors. They were not blood brothers, but neither brothers nor any other kin could have been as devoted to each other as were they. They used to go on plundering raids through [many] lands, and had seized many in Arabia. Wherever they went they plundered!—I went and took service with them. We spent our time in brigandage, and whenever a host appeared we would engage, slaughter, and put it to flight. Great lion-dchabukis were they indeed! I thought that there could be no dchabukis like them upon the earth.

<sup>1</sup> This formula is, of course, out of place here.

<sup>2</sup> *Noga*. Nogai, a descendant of Genghis Khan through Juji, was the real power in the Qipchaq khanate in the closing years of the thirteenth century. In later times the Nogai Tatars held sway in the region to the north of the Caspian. Grousset, pp. 479–81, 550–5. *Noga* here is, however, probably a corruption of *Nobat'i* ('sentinel'), which appears subsequently as Raïb's family name (see p. 190, &c.).

<sup>3</sup> Literally, 'Three certain Arab brigands appeared'.



At length, when the world had grown weary of our outrages, twelve thousand Turkish warriors assembled and came against us.—I was a witness of what followed! Each of our three chiefs dealt thus with some hundred men: they wrenched them from their saddles, dashed them to the ground, and killed them! We had a great battle, but in the end we put the host to flight, with such slaughter as to bring down the wrath of God upon it.

When the world had got to know of these feats of my chiefs no one dared<sup>1</sup> to do battle with them, for there was no one who could subdue them. So rich did we grow that our wealth was beyond reckoning or imagining. We used to spend our time in hunting and taking our ease, spending the summer in the mountains and coming down for the winter into the plains. And all who offered us battle we vanquished.

One day a man came and told us, 'A large caravan coming from India and bound for [the land of] the Persians is approaching. They are moving furtively, for fear of you. If you plunder them—never in all your days will you have taken so large a treasure! But I must tell you that they have an escort of four thousand warriors.'

Taking this man along with us, we set out: we got close up to the caravan and then charged. The escort saw us and came out to meet us, but we engaged it and put it to flight with slaughter. Then we plundered that caravan so as to bring down the wrath of God upon it, and carried off treasure beyond reckoning.<sup>2</sup> By God in Heaven, jewels, pearls, and brocades were there to sate our host—we did not trouble with anything less!

Now in the caravan there were three men who fled from us on such fine horses as neither I nor anyone else had ever seen. Those three chiefs of ours mounted and went off in pursuit, taking with them a hundred men. It was not the fugitives that they wanted, but their horses. We did not succeed in overtaking them—but then suddenly two of them drew their scimitars, wheeled round, got on either side of the third,<sup>3</sup> and set about him with their scimitars, inflicting wounds. Then the wounded man came fleeing towards us, [shouting,] 'Help!'

We pressed forward as hard as we could, but in the meantime he who had been struck by the scimitars fell from his horse: his

<sup>1</sup> Reading (*h*)*kadris* for *ikadris*, which would mean 'designed'.

<sup>2</sup> Reading *shagneba* for *shemeba*.

<sup>3</sup> Literally, 'the third companion'.

two companions caught it and sped off, so quickly that we could not see which way they had gone.

We went up to the wounded man. In amazement, we wondered what could have made them treat him so. Some said one thing and some another—such things as ‘They must have done it because they were enemies of his.’ He himself had fainted, and we could not put any questions to him.

We set him on a horse, put men on either side of him, and took him off with us. We were delighted to have captured such a large caravan and secured treasure beyond reckoning. Our chiefs said to us, ‘Sit by this man and see him cured.’ For although he had received wounds, they were not mortal.

When he had got back the use of his tongue we asked him, ‘Why did your comrades give you these wounds and leave you to fall into our hands like a dead man?’ He replied, ‘I will not say anything until you have completely cured me.’ We sat by him, tended him for a long time, and at last had him well again. Then our chiefs had him brought before them and asked him for his story. He said, ‘I know no more than this: I was guide to that caravan, and had told them that I would take them along a road on which no one would do them any harm. Those men who wounded me were the caravan’s leaders, and that horse they took away from me was theirs—it had only been loaned to me. When you came and plundered us we fled. God was wroth with me, and I went with those fugitives. Presently they said to me, “They have seized our treasures and our merchandise and slaughtered the warriors of our escort—and it is through your scheming that all this has come upon us! But we are not going to let you get away safe and sound—to join them and bring them to lift that herd of ours which none save you knows anything about!” With that they drew their scimitars and brought me to the pass in which you saw me. As for that herd of theirs, let me tell you that the horses in it are all like those you have seen—and indeed these were none of the best,<sup>1</sup> for they have twenty thousand mettlesome<sup>2</sup> ones which are yet finer.’

We believed all this that he told us, and our chiefs said to him, ‘Unhappy man!—Will you not help us to lift this herd?’ To this he replied, ‘As they must think me dead, they will no longer keep such close watch over it.—I will certainly help you to lift it, if you do not think it too far to go: for it means forty days’ travel.’

<sup>1</sup> Literally, ‘were not good ones’.

<sup>2</sup> The usual meaning of *mkhrdali* is ‘timid’.

[Now what he had said of] the quality of the horses and of the size of the herd had aroused our greed: for the present, as there was nothing else we could do, we set ourselves to take good care of this man, and by and by his health mended, and he got quite well again.

Then we made ready, and after we had put the weighty treasure [which we had taken from the caravan] inside a strong castle we had, we set out, with this man as guide. After forty days' travel we came to a high hill and went to the top of it. A herd was grazing there—beyond counting it was; we could not even guess at its numbers! Then our guide said, 'Look, this is the herd of which I told you—and there is no man of valour<sup>1</sup> anywhere at hand who might presume<sup>2</sup> to hinder you.' And he gave a laugh and said, 'I do not sin in avenging my wounds!'

Here is the Arab brigands' lifting of Mze Dchabuki's herd  
of horses; his pursuit, and the great battle that followed

We sent a thousand men down [the hill], and they got round behind the herd while it grazed in that deserted place, and began to drive it off. Then we set out. No one saw us, but we had to move slowly because of the size of the herd. We were delighted that we had succeeded in lifting it, and reckoned that it must contain twenty thousand horses. Our guide was delighted also, and kept laughing aloud. Presently he went off to the top of a hill and looked back: after that he told us, 'There is no one following—we shall be able to reach whatever place we choose before they find out that the herd has been driven away.' But for all that he kept looking back. Presently an old man in our host said to us, 'I am an old man, reared in brigandage among warriors, and proved in battle—and if that guide of ours is not playing us false I am a blockhead!' Some of us rebuked him, while others paid no heed. We journeyed on for three days, and still that guide kept looking back. At last he saw four horsemen, and said, 'Look, there are four horsemen coming! Who they can be I do not know—messengers, perhaps.' But he looked well pleased.

The horsemen gained on us: in the lead came a tall man, very fine to look upon, and riding a big horse, while the other three followed behind. Our guide gave a laugh—a fierce laugh—and

<sup>1</sup> Reading *mkhne kaci* for *mkheme*.

<sup>2</sup> Reading *kadreba* for *ikadreba*. (Cf. p. 170, n. 1.)

said, 'By Heaven, now I shall find out whether you are good dchabukis or no!' We were disappointed, but not much surprised: and after all we were a company of three thousand horsemen, and they were but four.

The tall man rode round and came to a halt in the road in front of us. Then he said, 'Who are you, brothers?—I am Mze Dchabuki, and this is my herd. You have done very ill in lifting it! Now be advised by me and surrender it: then you can go in peace, since you must have been tricked into coming along this road [to steal the horses]'.<sup>1</sup>

We gave no reply, and he repeated what he had said. Then we began to abuse him. He asked our guide if we were Arabs, and the guide replied that we were. Then Mze Dchabuki put out his hand, and one of his followers placed a spear in it. He said to us, 'Since you will not heed me, your blood be upon your own heads!'—and charged.

Our chiefs went forward to meet him: when he came up he lifted one on his spear, dashed him to the ground and killed him—then threw away his spear, drew his scimitar, struck the second, and killed him too. The third he did not strike with his scimitar, but, saying, 'See how I fight men who have armour and weapons!'—he flung it away, seized hold of him, wrenched him from his saddle, dashed him to the ground and killed him.

When he had slaughtered those three chiefs of ours with such ease we fled, but he came after us and wrought such havoc that it was as if the wrath of God had struck us! I was wounded, and my horse too. Mze Dchabuki came up to me and said, 'Miserable being! What made you think of lifting my herd?' I replied, 'This guide of ours tricked us.' Then the guide, who was standing by laughing, said, 'You took Mze Dchabuki's herd for a caravan!' Then we discovered that the guide's wound and the whole business had been a trick, and that he had cheated us into driving off Mze Dchabuki's herd for our destruction.

Mze Dchabuki told him to tell him everything, and he recounted our entire history from the beginning, also the whole of his own adventure. At the end he said, 'Had we not played this trick they would never have come here—and there was no one save you who could vanquish them. So we tricked them, and I helped them to carry off your herd—and now you have fittingly avenged us!'

<sup>1</sup> Literally, 'necks'.

At these words Mze Dchabuki laughed, and said, 'Yes, by Heaven, you thought your plan out well!' Then he went off, taking me with him. This was the first fight of Mze Dchabuki's that I saw—but many astounding battles was he yet to win!

We went to his hall, and there I recovered from my wound. At length, after giving me many presents, he told me to go home. I replied, 'I have no home anywhere. I was a retainer of those chiefs—but now that they are no more I would fain be yours for as long as I live. For I could not find another lord like you.' Then the talk turned to the day [of the battle], and Mze Dchabuki said, 'I too grieve over it: I had no wish to kill them, and spoke them fair—but they flew into a rage. They are very overbearing, these Arabs! Soft words avail nothing with them.'

Now this would I tell you of his hall and of its splendour—that it cannot be described by the tongue of man! And this will I tell you of Mze Dchabuki himself—never in all my life have I seen so fine-looking a man! And now you shall hear of his deeds of prowess.

He was an unerring huntsman, and would often go to the chase. No enemy ever showed himself [at such times]—none would have dared. Never has his like as an archer been seen.

One day while we were out hunting, and Mze Dchabuki was enjoying the sport, a man came up, made obeisance, and said to him, 'As you love hunting, I will take you to a hunting-ground such as you have never seen. It lies a long way off, but if you do not grudge the distance you will find it one such as no one has ever seen.'

Mze Dchabuki rejoiced, and we went home, taking this man with us. Then he asked him, 'Who are you, and where do you come from?' And the man replied, 'I am a wanderer, and should not myself know my native land.' Mze Dchabuki asked again, 'How far off is this hunting-ground?' And the man replied, 'It is a fortnight's journey distant.' Then Mze Dchabuki said, 'By God in Heaven, were it forty days off I would still go!' And so we made ready and set off with that man as guide.

After twelve days we found ourselves in a horrid and miserable region. We [followers] began to feel irked, first by the length of the road and secondly by this hard going—but Mze Dchabuki was not much affected: little did such things mean to him!

At length we reached the region [of which we had been told], and found it to be large, fair, and a good hunting-ground. We did

much hunting. The one thing against that ground was that there were too many [fierce] beasts in it. This, however, did not trouble Mze Dchabuki greatly—for he slaughtered those beasts like cats. By Your Majesty's head, many a time have I seen him kill lions with a *whip*! No one would have marvelled had he killed them with a scimitar!

Here is Mze Dchabuki's slaughtering of two lions while  
out hunting by dashing them together

One day, while we were out hunting, after loosing a hawk at a teal, Mze Dchabuki dismounted and went to the hawk's help. Then two lions came out from a reed-bed and charged him fiercely. He seized one by the throat, dashed it against the other—and so slaughtered both. When I saw how you had killed those lions, I wept because I remembered what he had done then. For he slaughtered them with the same ease!

Well, my lord, we spent three days<sup>1</sup> there, and did much hunting. Mze Dchabuki was delighted beyond measure, but we wondered that in three days' travel through such good land we had come upon neither village nor town. We could only suppose that the sons of men had been kept away by the great number of wild beasts.

Mze Dchabuki gave the guide thanks for bringing him to such a fine hunting-ground: after singing his praises the guide said, 'By Heaven, no one but you has ever reached this land, nor [if he had] could have hunted in it—but to such a lion-dchabuki as you everything is easy! But now, since you are such a great dchabuki—I know of another region close by with which this is no more to be compared for hunting than is any other man with you! I can tell you now that there are huge numbers of beasts in it. And besides that there is yet another region a day's journey beyond, which is such as no living soul dare approach. Here there is a very wondrous beast. No one has ever seen its face, or even tried to: but it is of tremendous size—as big as an elephant—and has the aspect of a lion, but with the face of a man. No man can stand against it in battle. So huge is it that it was able to lift up an enormous unicorn that was there in that region, dash it down and kill it! They call this beast the Lion-Man: we have heard that it is like this from the tales men tell, but no one knows any more about it.'

This story filled us [followers] with alarm, and we were angry

<sup>1</sup> Reading the variant *same dje*.

with the guide. This, however, made Mze Dchabuki annoyed with us, and [he ordered us] not to reproach him. Then he said to the man, 'Be our guide and take us to this hunting-ground.' The man said, 'Give me your oath that you will not force me to go any nearer that beast than I want to.'<sup>1</sup> And Mze Dchabuki replied, 'You can be sure that I will not force you to go any nearer than that—you can show us from a distance where it is.'

And so we went off to that region<sup>2</sup>—and indeed it did prove to be a much better hunting-ground than the first. We spent a few days there, hunting. The guide had spoken the truth—there were huge numbers of beasts. Still, for all their numbers, we suffered no harm from them. We [followers] contrived to slaughter them, but Mze Dchabuki killed them like cats! Yet [all the time] we were in dread of his meeting with that beast.

#### Here is Mze Dchabuki's battle with the fearful Lion-Man

After we had spent many days in hunting Mze Dchabuki said to the guide, 'Now show me the place where the beast is.' The guide wept and besought him, 'Have pity on your valour, and do not go to fight with it!' But to this Mze Dchabuki only replied, 'Now that I am here there can be no thought of anything save battle!' The guide was grieved, but there was nothing to be done, and we [followers] did not dare to say anything.

We set out, and presently came to the beast's haunt, which was in a very beautiful region. The guide said, 'This is where you will find the beast.' We went on, and hunted—but there was no sign of the beast round there.

Presently Mze Dchabuki asked the guide, 'Well, where is it?' The guide replied, 'It was indeed here—I have not been deceiving you! It must have taken itself off somewhere else.'

He had no sooner said this than, as though it had caught the scent of human-kind, the beast appeared, crashing through a reed-bed, its paws making a noise like a cascade of rocks. At this the guide gave a scream and fled. Mze Dchabuki put on his armour, mounted his horse, and took his long-sword in his hand.—Had you seen him then, you would have said, 'No one can ever have seen a man like this!'

The beast came out of the reed-bed, saw Mze Dchabuki, and

<sup>1</sup> Literally, 'nearer than I shall indicate to you'.

<sup>2</sup> Sc. the first of the two spoken of by the guide.

charged at once, bellowing. Mze Dchabuki charged fiercely, too, and at the first onset thrust his long-sword through its mouth right down into its throat, and forced it to its knees. Then he leapt from his horse, drew his scimitar, and charged. Then they fought together—never has such fighting been seen! Mze Dchabuki dealt blows with his scimitar, and the beast struck him with its paw. By God in Heaven, whenever the beast brought its paw down upon his armour a noise like the thunder in the heavens came off it, and whenever Mze Dchabuki struck with his scimitar, just such another came off the beast's bones! The fight went on for a long time: the Lion-Man had been weakened by the first blow<sup>1</sup>—but by Your Majesty's head, Mze Dchabuki was no more wearied than he would have been sitting at a feast! Presently he called out to us, 'Now behold the prowess of Mze Dchabuki!'—then shouted at the beast, struck it upon the back with his scimitar, and cleft it in two. The beast fell, and at its fall the earth shook.

Then we saw that all the folk of the land were coming towards us: as soon as they were sure that the beast was dead they came right up, made obeisance to Mze Dchabuki, sang his praises, and said, 'No dchabuki like you has ever been seen upon the face of all the earth!' And they rejoiced greatly—for that fair land had been utterly laid waste by the beast. They bestowed countless gifts upon Mze Dchabuki. We stayed there for many days, but only after a while did we learn that our guide was of that land, and that, having heard Mze Dchabuki's prowess praised, he had taken it on himself to fetch him.

And now there was joy in the land, and we spent our time in hunting. Presently the folk turned to rebuilding.

Here is Mze Dchabuki's hearing of the praises of the Khazar king's daughter, and his leaving of his hunting to go to win her<sup>2</sup>

One day a baron of the land came to Mze Dchabuki, sang his praises, and said, 'Blessed are He who created you and the land that bred you, for there is no dchabuki like you upon the face of all the earth!' And he bestowed many gifts upon him.

This man stayed with us for many days, and joined in the hunting and diversions.<sup>3</sup> Then at length he told Mze Dchabuki that

<sup>1</sup> Sc. that dealt with the long-sword.

<sup>2</sup> In the text this heading comes after Mze Dchabuki's words, 'lead the way—there are enough of us!' (see p. 178). <sup>3</sup> Literally, 'hunted and diverted himself'.



he had some things to speak about to him, and when Mze Dchabuki told him to speak on he began.

'This land, and that man [who brought you here] as well, owe allegiance to the Khazar king.—Now I am going to tell you in confidence all that I know of this matter, and then you must do as you choose. But because there is no one like you today upon the face of all the earth, either in aspect or in prowess, I am going to keep this matter secret from you no longer.

'The Khazar king is lord of this whole land, and is an absolute monarch. He has no son, but he has a daughter—a maiden whose like no one has ever seen! And her father, the great Khazar king, has sworn that until he can find a dchabuki who has no peer anywhere upon the earth he will not give his daughter in marriage to anyone.

'Now I have heard your prowess praised, but in you I see one to whom all that was said did less than justice!—The Khazar king heard of your prowess, and much [said in your] praise; and he it was who sent on his errand that man who brought you here [to slaughter] the beast.<sup>1</sup> You have succeeded; and in killing it you have dared a deed without peer in the memory of man.

'Certain other valiant and heroic dchabukis have heard of the virtues and beauty of my lord's daughter, and are now come seeking to bear her away: Ghamar Ghazneli,<sup>2</sup> Ordavareli, and Mosor Nadirisdze—those three have already arrived and are before the gates of the city. Amarindo is looked for also—of this Amarindo they say that there is no dchabuki like him upon the earth's back. Now the Khazar king intends to marry his daughter to whichever among these excels in prowess, and, furthermore, to put the realm into his hands.—This much I know, and, now that I have told it to you, you must do as you choose.'

Mze Dchabuki gave the baron his thanks, and said, 'You are a good man, and have spoken generously of me—now be my guide, and let us set out.' The baron said, 'Having come here to hunt you have with you only these few warriors: send messengers to summon your host.' But to these words Mze Dchabuki replied, 'I have no need of a host: lead the way—there are enough of us!'

<sup>1</sup> The statement about the mission at the end of the last section would suggest that the man had been acting on his own initiative.

<sup>2</sup> *Gamar Gazneli*: literally, 'Ghamar of Ghazni'.

We set out with that baron as our guide, and all through our journey he furnished us with such entertainment as he would have his own lord. The folk of city after city came out to meet us, made obeisance to Mze Dchabuki, and sang his praises. Thus we travelled on through scenes of pomp.—Our guide's name was Abram, and they said that he had been the foster-father of the Khazar king.

We journeyed on: and then when we had got within three days' journey of the Khazar king's capital a man came up who, after making obeisance to our lord, said something to Abram apart. Mze Dchabuki asked Abram, 'Who is this man, and what news has he brought you?' Abram replied, 'That the realm is at peace: and he also inquired how you did.' But then Mze Dchabuki asked the man himself what news he had brought,<sup>1</sup> and the man told him, 'Amarindo has come with a great following and boundless pomp: he has large and well-furnished tents of heavy gold brocade, adorned with rich purple fabrics, and with him he has a countless host. Ghamar Ghazneli, Ordavareli, and Mosor Nadirisdze have already been long before our lord's gates—good dchabukis are they, with large hosts. And Dorat<sup>2</sup> Dilami and Amar<sup>3</sup> Iamaneli<sup>4</sup> are on the way as well with countless hosts.'<sup>5</sup>

After he had told us this we went on: presently we came up with Dorat Dilami and Amar Iamaneli, but that night we and they encamped separately. Arrogant men they were, and neither hailed Mze Dchabuki nor came over to see him. Mze Dchabuki, however, said to Abram, 'Now, look here: since those men have not come over to see us, we are going to go and see them—we shall not demean ourselves thereby.'

We went to see them, and when they saw us coming they came out to meet us. Mze Dchabuki exchanged greetings with Dorat and Amar,<sup>6</sup> and we entered their tent. They were greatly delighted with Mze Dchabuki, and said, 'There is no dchabuki like him upon the earth!' Then they spread us a feast, and we dined there with them. After that we went off to our own tent. On the following day they came over to visit us, and we in our turn spread a feast for them. They dined with us, and after that went off to their own tent.

<sup>1</sup> Literally, 'asked the man, "What do you know?"'

<sup>2</sup> *Dorat*.

<sup>3</sup> (*Umar*.)

<sup>4</sup> Literally, 'the Yemeni'.

<sup>5</sup> These exchanges contain many obscurities.

<sup>6</sup> Literally, 'They exchanged greetings'.

Then Abram said, 'I can see you as the lord of this land, for I have seen your prowess.—Now, since you set out [from home] on a hunting expedition, you have with you no array of gifts: but you will have to give [presents] to those dchabukis. So give me the word and I will procure some for you to bestow upon them.' Mze Dchabuki gave him many thanks, saying, 'Indeed it were only fitting to bestow much upon them—though I do not wish to give you trouble.'

After that Abram sent off a man to bring fine raiment and wondrous gold brocades—for now we were encamped quite close to the city. For this Abram—pre-eminent as he was, and first among all [the barons] of the realm, by choice of the Khazar king—everything was possible. [And after the man came back] Mze Dchabuki bestowed very great<sup>1</sup> gifts upon Dorat Dilami and Amar Iamaneli.

The next day we moved away and set off, but presently Dilami and Amar Iamaneli came up and said, 'From this day forward we are your men! Now that we have seen what kind of man you are, we are yours!—At the place we are going to there are other dchabukis who have banded together; and if you will have us we shall stay with you in the same fashion.'

Mze Dchabuki gave them his thanks, and said, 'You will be as brothers to me! Yes, by Heaven, let us stay together! But this pact that makes three brothers of us must not become known to anyone.'<sup>2</sup> After that Dorat and Amar made obeisance, and we went on.

At the gates of the city we found the four dchabukis Amarindo, Ghamar Ghazneli, Ordavareli, and Mosor Nadirisdze. In Amarindo's camp there were red pavilions, tents fashioned out of purple stuffs—and a great host. The three [other] dchabukis had their lodging close by him.<sup>3</sup>

Being come from a hunting expedition, Mze Dchabuki had no rich stuffs with him, but Abram went on ahead—and before we arrived he had gold-brocaded tents unrolled, and a pavilion erected for Mze Dchabuki which was furnished with all manner of couches and rugs, and with rich fabrics and ewers. Presently we arrived and dismounted at those tents, and Dorat Dilami and Amar Iamaneli encamped beside us. And so we took up our quarters, while the

<sup>1</sup> Or perhaps, 'very many'.

<sup>2</sup> No reason for this secrecy emerges.

<sup>3</sup> This passage on the four dchabukis is somewhat confused in the text.

news ran through the land that Mze Dchabuki had come. Everyone came to see him, and all said, 'Nowhere have we seen a man like him!'

The following day Amarindo, Ghamar Ghazneli, Ordavareli, and Mosor Nadirisdze came to visit us. No dchabuki could be finer to look upon than was Amarindo. He had the frame of a fine athlete, and the demeanour of a prince. He was not the peer of Mze Dchabuki, but still he was man enough—and he was gay, friendly, and modest. Mze Dchabuki was much pleased with him.

Ghamar Ghazneli was a big man, of unequalled prowess, and he too was good enough to look on; though he was not the peer of Amarindo. He had, however, a somewhat bloodthirsty air. Mosor Nadirisdze and Ordavareli were also very good dchabukis. But the first among them all was Amarindo.

Mze Dchabuki would not let any of them go away, but had them eat and feast with him. During the banquet he gave many presents to all.

While the feasting was on a baron came from Khosro the Khazar king, bearing gifts for all—a great many for Mze Dchabuki, somewhat fewer for Amarindo, and equal measure for all the others. Along with them the king had also sent this message: 'I welcome your decision to come here, and your arrival affords me great joy.' When they heard this all rose and made a gesture of respect. That day was spent joyously in feasting—but we separated early.

The following day we assembled at Amarindo's, and feasted as before, while Amarindo bestowed gifts upon everyone. That same baron of the king's came once more, bringing raiment and presents for all. We spent the day there, with great rejoicing. Musicians played, tumblers entertained, and everyone was merry. . . . To be short, we went and feasted with each of the seven dchabukis [in turn]: Mze Dchabuki, Amarindo, Ordavareli, Dorat Dilami, Amar Iamaneli, Ghamar Ghazneli, and Mosor Nadirisdze. They bestowed gifts upon each other, and the king sent presents to all.

Many days went by, and we found much delight in sports. As an archer Mze Dchabuki excelled all the [other] dchabukis: as a wrestler, Amarindo: at play with the spear, Ordavareli: at horsemanship, Dorat Dilami: as a huntsman, Mosor Nadirisdze: as a chess-player, Amar Iamaneli: as a swimmer Ghamar Ghazneli—I myself have seen him put his arm round a man in full armour and take him across a stretch of water, be it never so rough, to the

far side! Now you can judge for yourselves as to which excelled in prowess.

(We listened to the man's story, King of Kings, with great delight: but I cannot tell whether it is pleasing you—?)

Thus did we spend many days in diversion—and then one day when those dchabukis were sitting feasting with Mze Dchabuki, Abram, who was there with us, rose and said, addressing everyone, 'Such diversions as these—drinking, hunting, and gaieties—each of you could have enjoyed at home! Now you must turn to settling the business that brought you here: for until you do battle with one another, and so let it be seen which among you it is that excels—which is what you came here for—you are only wasting your time.'

Amarindo rose and said, 'Abram, are you saying this on your own account, or have you been put up to it by the king?' Abram replied, 'The king has said nothing to me: this is what we are all saying! We all want to see you fight—it is for your prowess that we love you! All this hunting, feasting, gaiety, drinking, and singing we can manage for ourselves!'

At these words Mze Dchabuki laughed and said, 'Amarindo and I are not going to fight—but if any of the others wish to, let them!' Then Ghamar Ghazneli said, 'By Heaven, it is high time we had some fighting here!' And Ordavareli agreed, 'Yes, by Heaven! Let us either do battle or take ourselves off, each to his own home!' Then Amar Iamaneli said, 'By Heaven, I am determined to go out [on to the maidan] tomorrow; and let any of you—excepting Mze Dchabuki and Amarindo—who has confidence in his prowess,<sup>1</sup> come out also.'

Then Mosor Nadirisdze took up the challenge, and they determined upon battle for the following day.

Here is the battle of Amar Iamaneli and Mosor Nadirisdze  
in Khazaria

When the feast had ended and day had broken the clarions and tabors were sounded, Khosro the Khazar king came out to watch, placed his barons round about him, and held a feast; while all the townsfolk took their places to watch. The dchabukis assembled round Mze Dchabuki and feasted also.

Then Amar Iamaneli and Mosor Nadirisdze came out in their

<sup>1</sup> Literally, 'who enjoys success'.

armour, shouted at each other, and engaged. By God in Heaven, their fighting was fierce enough! Three times did this one have that one down, and three times that one this. But though they fought until dusk neither succeeded in gaining a victory, and we could not tell which was the better. At length Amarindo said that he would not let them fight any longer, and so they separated. Everyone was delighted with the way they had fought, and the Khazar king sent them raiment and many gifts.

The next day, while we were feasting at Amarindo's, Dorat Dilami and Ordavareli challenged each other to battle on the following day.

Here is the battle of Dorat Dilami and Ordavareli in  
Khazaria

In the morning the Khazar king was told of what was afoot, and he seated himself to watch, placing his barons round about him. Once more he held a feast, while the townsfolk took their places to watch. We assembled at Amarindo's, and sat down to feast. And soon the king had sent a man with this message: 'Let them begin; and let them achieve a decision!'

Dorat and Ordavareli went out, shouted at each other, and engaged. By Your Majesty's head, that battle was fierce enough! They fought for a long time—until nightfall—first with the spear and then with the scimitar. The victor was Dorat Dilami, for at length Ordavareli declared that he could fight no longer. Mze Dchabuki was much delighted at Dorat Dilami's victory, and the king sent raiment to both Dorat and Ordavareli.

On the third day after that Ghamar Ghazneli said, 'Tomorrow it will be my turn to do battle: let any of you who has confidence in his prowess<sup>1</sup> come out!' As we sat feasting everyone was thinking to himself that Ghamar wanted to get either Mze Dchabuki or Amarindo to fight. But before either of these could say anything Amar Iamaneli made haste to take up the challenge. And so they determined upon battle for the following day.

Here is the battle of Ghamar Ghazneli and Amar Iamaneli  
in Khazaria

They told the Khazar king of what was afoot, and when day had broken and the sun had turned the earth to the colour of ruby he

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 182, *note*.

seated himself as before to watch, and placed his barons round about him. Once more he held a feast, and the dchabukis assembled for theirs at Mze Dchabuki's.

Ghamar Ghazneli went out—man enough to look at was he! Then Amar Iamaneli came out; and he too looked very well. Khosro the Khazar king would have liked above all else to have had Mze Dchabuki and Amarindo do battle without delay; but first Ghamar and Amar would have to have their combat.

They circled round each other at the gallop, shouted and engaged. By your head, fierce and hard was their battle! Now Amarindo had said beforehand, 'That Ghamar Ghazneli is treacherous, and if he gets the upper hand at any point, he will not let Amar get away unharmed!'

The battle grew fierce, and presently Amar Iamaneli charged, struck [Ghamar's] helmet with his scimitar, cleft through it and cut deeply into his head. Just then, however, Amar Iamaneli's own helmet slipped, and before he could get it back in place Ghamar Ghazneli struck his bare head with his scimitar and killed him.

The king, Mze Dchabuki, and Amarindo all grieved over the death of Amar Iamaneli; but especially Mze Dchabuki. The concourse broke up, but this time the king gave away no raiment. He did not pass censure on Ghamar, but he sent a man to Mze Dchabuki and Amarindo with this question: 'Was there some blood-feud between the two to make him kill Amar Iamaneli, or is it merely that he is a base and wicked wretch?'

For many days there was no more hunting, or sport, or feasting—for everyone was grieving. At length, however, the king began once more to give away fine raiment and great quantities of gifts to all. For he said, 'We must not continue thus: none among you grieves more than I over the treacherous killing of Amar Iamaneli—but now, if you so please, go out hunting, engage in martial exercises, and be merry.'

[The dchabukis] obeyed the king, and went out, hunted, diverted themselves, and held banquets. But everyone was thinking, 'What the king wants is to have Mze Dchabuki and Amarindo fight together.'

One day when [the dchabukis] were gathered at a feast at Mze Dchabuki's, after some talk Dorat Dilami challenged Ghamar Ghazneli. Then Mze Dchabuki said to Dorat Dilami, 'Why do you want to fight with a base, treacherous villain?—Well, if you must,

bear yourself valiantly, but also prudently, so that he does not get you at a disadvantage.' Thereupon Ghamar Ghazneli said to Mze Dchabuki, 'Why only give advice?—Come out and fight with me yourself!' Mze Dchabuki replied, 'That is what I wanted: God has willed your death, and now it is to be brought about.' Then they determined upon battle for the following day, and separated.

Here is the battle of Mze Dchabuki and Ghamar Ghazneli  
in Khazaria

When the Khazar king was told that Mze Dchabuki and Ghamar Ghazneli were going to do battle on the following day, he sent a man [to Mze Dchabuki] with this message: 'Take good care—that man is treacherous!' To this Mze Dchabuki replied, 'It is for him to decide whether he will refrain from treachery or not—I will not try to make him do so!'

The king came out and seated himself once more in the same place. Meanwhile the news ran through the town that Mze Dchabuki and Ghamar Ghazneli were going to fight—and everyone rejoiced, for they had been wanting to see Mze Dchabuki [in battle]. All the onlookers took their places, and the clarions and tabors were sounded. When Mze Dchabuki went out in his armour on to the maidan they said, 'There is none like him upon the earth!' Then Ghamar Ghazneli came out, armed in the same fashion.

The king's daughter learned that Mze Dchabuki had come out to do battle, and she went to her window to watch. By your head, a radiance shone forth that was like the sun's! Mze Dchabuki perceived this brightness coming from the window, then saw the king's daughter herself—and guessed that it was to see him that she was standing there. Then he addressed those words to Ghamar Ghazneli, 'Look out for yourself! For by God in Heaven, I have made up my mind to kill you in vengeance for your treacherous killing of Amar Iamaneli!' And with that he shouted and charged fiercely.

At his first onslaught Ghamar Ghazneli was so terror-stricken that he could not even make use of his scimitar. Mze Dchabuki struck him on his helmet with his, and by Your Majesty's head, cleft him down to the breast, bringing him down on to the pommel of his saddle—and killed him.

The king, the queen, and all the barons were overjoyed: the king jumped up and laughed loudly, while all sang Mze Dchabuki's



praises. The king and the queen, too, sent him fine raiment, and the barons likewise bestowed numberless gifts upon him. The king also sent him this message: 'Glory be to God for endowing you with such prowess that you have been able to avenge Amar Iamaneli!'

After that we spent many days in the delights of hunting, gaieties, and jousting. Sometimes the others came to us, and sometimes we went to them. No lack had we of pleasure and enjoyment!

One day, when we were taking our ease, Abram came before Mze Dchabuki and told him, 'The king is fain to have you and Amarindo do battle.' Mze Dchabuki replied, 'I cannot bring myself to speak to Amarindo about this matter, or to address words of provocation to him: you yourself must raise the question before us both, at some time when we are sitting together.'

One day when we were sitting feasting at Amarindo's, Abram rose, picked up two goblets, filled them, gave one to Amarindo, the other to Mze Dchabuki, and said, 'Lion-dchabukis, drink this wine—for now everyone here wants you to do battle.' Then Amarindo said, 'Mze Dchabuki, drink this wine! Since all expect this of us, their desire must be satisfied.'—And Mze Dchabuki assented.

They embraced, determined upon battle for the following day, and separated.

Here is the battle of Mze Dchabuki and the dchabuki  
Amarindo in Khazaria

When they told Khosro the Khazar king that Mze Dchabuki and Amarindo were going to do battle the next day he rejoiced, and said, 'They must not engage until I come out.' Then in the morning tents of brocaded velvet were unrolled, and thrones covered with cloth of gold were set upon golden supports.<sup>1</sup>

Khosro the Khazar king came out, seated himself upon his throne, placed his barons round about him, and held a feast. Minstrels sang, tumblers performed, and clarioneers and taborers came forward. We all went up to the king's table, and onlookers from all over the land appeared. The queen came out and seated herself upon a dais, placing her radiant daughter at her side.

<sup>1</sup> (?) '... thrones covered with cloth of gold and with golden supports [for their canopies] were set out.'

Countless were the crowds of onlookers, great was the noise, and boundless the rejoicing!

Mze Dchabuki put on his armour and came out—and everyone in the crowd said, ‘There is not another man like him upon the earth, or any who could stand against him in battle!’ Amarindo likewise came out in his armour, and with him too they were much delighted. Had you seen them you would have said, ‘By Heaven, those two are men enough—there can be none like them!’ After that Mze Dchabuki and Amarindo filled in the time moving about in the maidan.

Presently the king sent a man to them with this message: ‘You have no need of guidance from me—but do not deal treacherously with each other!’ Mze Dchabuki sent back the reply: ‘Nothing treacherous will be done by me: as for the other—he knows well enough how to conduct himself.’

Then they urged forward their steeds, circled round each other at the gallop, charged, shouted, and engaged. Never have I seen such fierce fighting—and all who were there said, ‘Never has such fierce fighting been seen by the eye of man!’ They fought on until in the evening the coming of darkness separated them: but neither had gained a victory. The king and all the people besides rejoiced that they were both unhurt. The king and queen bestowed fine raiment upon them, and presented them with countless gifts. After that the gathering broke up, and we went off to feast in our own lodging.

The next day Mze Dchabuki and Amarindo came out again—and by Your Majesty’s head, they fought yet more fiercely and yet harder than on the day before! Once more they fought through until the evening, when they were separated by the coming of night without a victory having been won by either. Galling to Mze Dchabuki was this equality in battle!

The king gave them fine raiment, sang their praises, and said, ‘No more fighting!—For I am satisfied that there can be no dchabuki like you [two] upon the face of all the earth!’ To this Amarindo made no reply, for in truth he would gladly have had done with combat—but Mze Dchabuki said, ‘Let us engage again tomorrow, and if we still fare equally well in battle then we can have done with fighting.’ They determined upon battle for the following day, and separated.

We went off to our tent, and Mze Dchabuki said, ‘This man has

only come off as well as I in these battles because I have been fearful of killing him: because he is such a good man I have not been striking with my full strength.' And in the city there were disputes, some maintaining that one excelled, some the other—while yet others declared that in prowess there was nothing to choose between them.

Here is the third battle of Mze Dchabuki and the dchabuki Amarindo, and Mze Dchabuki's unhorsing of Amarindo and dashing of him to the ground

When day had broken and the sun had sent forth its beams, the king took his seat and placed his barons round about him. The queen also came out, and they seated themselves upon the same dais as before. All the people came out to watch, and there was a huge gathering of onlookers.

The hero-dchabukis went out on to the maidan, and Mze Dchabuki said to Amarindo, 'Today must decide between you and me!' And Amarindo replied, 'It must indeed: let us have no trifling!'

They shouted and engaged—and by God in Heaven and Your Majesty's head, so much more fiercely did they fight that the battles of the days before were now made to seem like mere sport!

They fought through until the evening—and then at last Mze Dchabuki drew off his horse, wheeled about, and then charged, shouting, as far as we could hear, 'Look out for yourself as well as you can—for no longer am I going to treat you gently!' Then Amarindo came at him, struck him with his scimitar on his helmet, cut through the helmet<sup>1</sup> and wounded him deeply in the head. Then Mze Dchabuki flung away his scimitar, for fear of killing Amarindo, closed with him, seized him by his sword-arm, wrenched him out of his saddle, dashed him to the ground, and knocked the senses out of him.

The king rose up from his throne, crying out, 'God forbid that he should meet his death!' To this Mze Dchabuki replied, 'What I desired was to vanquish him, and that I have now done—"meet his death", forsooth!' Then the king said, 'Glory to God, who has given you such a heart, as well as making you such a man of prowess!' And all rejoiced with one accord over Mze Dchabuki's victory, and sang his praises.

<sup>1</sup> The text has 'breastplate'.

Amarindo was bereft of his senses for a long time, but at length he came to himself and stood up. The king took the two to his tent, and bestowed fine raiment upon them. Many presents did the king and queen give them before they went back into the city.

The following day Amarindo came to Mze Dchabuki's tent and said, 'By Heaven, I should indeed have liked to vanquish you—but God favoured you and gave you such power that you could easily<sup>1</sup> have killed me: and yet you did not!' And they became firm friends and swore oaths of brotherhood.

Now after this we looked each day for the wedding [of Mze Dchabuki and the king's daughter]—but then one day when Amarindo, Ordavareli, Dorat Dilami, and Mosor Nadirisdze were at Mze Dchabuki's, Abram came in and sat down with a sombre mien. Mze Dchabuki asked him, 'Why are you so sombre?'—and he replied, 'Just how it came about I do not know—but somehow or other it did, during the festivities commanded by the king. Because they believed that the maiden's mother did not want to have her daughter given away in marriage, and was grieving over the prospect, [certain men]<sup>2</sup> stole that radiant one away last night, and bore her off to the Land of the Sorcerers. No way is there either of winning through to the place where she is, or[, even if there were,] of getting her back, even though the heroes and men of prowess of all the earth were to be mustered.—And now you must do as you think best.'

We were all grieved at this: but Amarindo declared, 'By Heaven, I am neither going to go off to her rescue nor to stay here any longer!'<sup>3</sup> Mze Dchabuki, however, said, 'Having come thus far [to win her, I am determined to go to the Land of the Sorcerers]—and if I cannot bring her back, I will not return alive!'

Abram said to him, 'Mze Dchabuki, your youth, your beauty, and your unexampled prowess move me!—Do not go! No one who has attempted that journey has ever come back unscathed!' When he heard this, however, Mze Dchabuki replied, 'By Heaven, no one like me has ever attempted it! Now give me a guide, and do not worry about anything else: I know what I am about!' Abram said, 'I can give you guides: they will go with you as far as they dare,

<sup>1</sup> Reading *advilad* for *arad*.

<sup>2</sup> Presumably sympathizers of the queen's. The passage is obscure, but it seems to leave open the question whether or not the queen was privy to the kidnapping. No subsequent light is thrown on this point.

<sup>3</sup> Our author seems to discard Amarindo with some embarrassment.

and then point out the way forward to you.—You must do as you will!’

While Mze Dchabuki was preparing to set out, Dorat Dilami came to him and said, ‘I am going with you.’ And Mze Dchabuki gave him thanks. Then Mosor Nadirisdze came, and he said in his turn, ‘There is nothing to take me there on my own account, but I am going with you, being ready to sacrifice all for your sake.’ And to him too Mze Dchabuki gave thanks.

Then Amarindo said, ‘As I have declared already, I would not myself have been moved to set off on this journey; but if you want me I shall go with you.’ To this Mze Dchabuki replied, ‘You need not give yourself the trouble—there are enough of us as it is.’

Then Abram came up and said, ‘Do not go! Do not bring death upon yourself, peerless one! There is no winning through along that road!’ But Mze Dchabuki replied, ‘Just give me a guide—there is no call to offer advice!’ Then Abram promised to furnish guides, and brought in four men who knew the way. At first they swore, ‘Nothing will make us go: rather cut off our heads here and now!’ But when we had given them the assurance that they need only take us as far as their courage might carry them, and that then they would be free to turn back, they agreed to come. However, they went on to say, ‘There may be some other way into [the Land of the Sorcerers], but we only know of three roads, and in truth there would be no getting in by any of them. And even if we did succeed in winning our way along one or other of them, we should still not manage to reach the king’s daughter.’ Then Mze Dchabuki said to them, ‘No more of this talk! Your part is to show us the way: do not trouble yourselves with anything else!’

And then, as there was nothing more he could do to stop him from setting out, Abram wept much for Mze Dchabuki.

Here is Mze Dchabuki’s journeying over the hard and  
impassable road to the Land of the Sorcerers to fetch the  
Khazar king’s daughter

When day had broken we set out—Mze Dchabuki himself, and with him Dorat Dilami, Mosor Nadirisdze, me Raïb Nobati,<sup>1</sup> and two other of Mze Dchabuki’s retainers. King of Kings, give ear!—We set out with those four<sup>2</sup> guides, and after many days’ journey

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 169, n. 2.

<sup>2</sup> In the text, ‘two’: but elsewhere the number is always given as four.

we passed out of the Khazar king's realm and found ourselves in a land which, though it was fair and of great size, was without any people. The guides said, 'We have reached the Land of the Sorcerers—and now we must warn you to keep a sharp lookout for hidden treachery: you will have trouble enough from what you can see plainly!'

We journeyed on, still without seeing any of human-kind—and then suddenly we saw six horsemen with spears in their hands advancing rapidly towards us. The guides said, 'Those men are coming to give battle!' Then, just as we were getting ready to obey Mze Dchabuki's command to charge,<sup>1</sup> a man overtook those horsemen and said to them, 'There is no need to worry about those men.<sup>2</sup> But Abad Abashi<sup>3</sup> is on the move, and you are commanded to go against him.'

When the messenger had told them this, the six horsemen gave a shout, wheeled about, and made off swiftly. Mze Dchabuki said, 'It grieves me that this Abad Abashi should have got ahead of us!' The guides replied, 'By Heaven, there is small need for that; for he will no more succeed in reaching the king's daughter than we shall!'<sup>4</sup>

We journeyed on, and presently the whole host of the land came up. They were talking of Abad Abashi, and paid no heed to us. Dorat Dilami said, 'He must be a good dchabuki, this Abad Abashi!'

We met no one else on that day's journey, but on the following day we came upon a stream of blood. We were amazed, and the guides said, 'We have never seen this stream before: perhaps Abad Abashi has been attacked, and this blood is flowing from him.'

We followed that [stream of] blood, and then presently we saw a man in headlong flight who wept as he ran. Mze Dchabuki asked him who he was, and what ailed him. And he replied, 'I was a retainer of Abad Abashi's: this blood is flowing from him, for he has been attacked.—I think that they must have killed him by now.'

With that he made off, and we hurried on, for we wanted to arrive before the battle was over. However, when we got there we found Abad Abashi unhorsed and mortally wounded. We gazed at him:

<sup>1</sup> Literally, 'as we were preparing . . . they [? he] told us to charge'.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, 'These are easy!'

<sup>3</sup> Literally, 'Abad [*Ubad*] the Abyssinian'.

<sup>4</sup> The *game* in the text seems to be meaningless.

never in all my life have I seen so huge a man! It was indeed from him that the blood was flowing. In his hands he had a bloody scimitar, and he was still hanging on to his horse. There were no other warriors about—they had all gone off, leaving him there. He had lost the use of his tongue and could only gaze up at us. Had you seen him you would have thought him a piteous sight indeed!

Mze Dchabuki was grieved that he had not come up in time for the battle. The guides said, 'Since Abad Abashi has fared thus you can take it that mere prowess is not enough!' We were grieved, and sickened.

Mosor Nadirisdze said, 'I am going to take his horse—truly no one has ever seen such a huge one!' And he laid hands upon it to take it—but then, although he could scarcely use his tongue for speech, Abad Abashi managed to say, 'For all that I am dying, I am not giving my horse to anyone!' Then with his scimitar the mortally-wounded man struck at his horse's saddle: by Your Majesty's head, so keenly did he strike that the scimitar went clean through the horse and into the earth! And having killed his horse, he expired himself. Much amazed were we at the sharpness of his scimitar!

Mze Dchabuki said, 'Truly he must have been a coward:<sup>1</sup> otherwise who could have given his death-wound to<sup>2</sup> one with such a power to cut!' To this the guides replied, 'Those he met must have excelled him!' And Mze Dchabuki declared, 'By Heaven, it is indeed a very evil road we are on!' We [retainers] were reluctant to go any farther, for we were sorely afraid—but small was the heed paid to us! Mze Dchabuki only said, 'Come along! We are going on—why are we standing here gazing at a corpse?'

We set off and journeyed on for a little. When night overtook us we halted, and the guides said, 'Tonight we shall need a guard.' Dorat Dilami said, 'I shall be guard tonight.' And stand on guard he did. Warriors came up, and he had much fighting to do, and slaughtered many. When he came up in the morning Mze Dchabuki gave him thanks.

We set off and journeyed on throughout that day. [Once more when we made our halt] the guides said, 'Tonight we shall need a guard here.' Mosor Nadirisdze stood on guard, and he had even more fighting to do. To him likewise Mze Dchabuki gave thanks.

<sup>1</sup> Literally, 'an evil man'.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, 'have killed . . . '.

To be short—each of us [retainers] kept guard in turn at night over the encampment.

One day the guides said to Mze Dchabuki, 'Tonight when we make our halt you yourself must condescend to stand on guard.' And he replied, 'Yes, by Heaven, I will—and you can go to sleep without any fears.' And he did indeed stand on guard; but that night no one at all appeared, nor did any warriors come up.—They must have held him in dread. In the morning he came up and said to us, 'That was an easy guard you gave me!' But the guides only replied, 'By Heaven, it was no "easy" place!—Tonight they are sure to come.'

We set off and journeyed on for a little. Presently those horsemen with spears in their hands whom we had seen already came up, followed by a very<sup>1</sup> great host. The guides declared that they had been expecting this. Two of the horsemen came charging at our guides, made for the two who were in the lead—and then, before we could go to their aid, they had picked them up on their spears and made off, while the [remaining] two hurried back to us. We could not even tell which way the two [who had been seized] had been taken<sup>2</sup> [—so swiftly did their captors disappear].

Mze Dchabuki was mortified, and said that we had done but poorly. The two [remaining] guides began to weep, and said, 'We did not come ready to face such chances as this!'

Then the whole of that host of horsemen charged us with much clamour. We closed with them valiantly—and by your head and by Heaven, had you seen Mze Dchabuki then, he would have pleased you much! We fought through until the evening, but as the battle wore on we grew exhausted, and at length Mze Dchabuki had to fight alone: only Dorat Dilami and Mosor Nadirisdze were still able to help him a little. Yet, by your head, he did not seem much tired, but rather as though he were sitting at a feast! Then when night fell the host fled. We made our halt there, and found that we had slaughtered a great many warriors.

The next day we went on with the two guides remaining with us, and for some time we journeyed on without seeing anyone. Then a small lake appeared before us, and presently five men came up to it, bathed in it, and turned into lions. After that they went off along the same road as we were following ourselves. Then five

<sup>1</sup> Reading *metad* for *meotad*.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, 'We could find no trace of the two'.



dragons came up, bathed, turned into men, and went off likewise. Next five more men came up, bathed, turned into birds,<sup>1</sup> and went off. We said, 'Who can all these have been, and why did they not speak to us?' And so frightened were we that we did not dare to make a sound. Terror seized us, and Mze Dchabuki said, 'This is all devilry!'—We made a halt there, but nothing further appeared.

[Next morning before daybreak] our guides told us that that day's journey would be perilous and difficult. When we asked them why this should be so, they said, 'Anyone among you who harbours any fear in his heart must fly when he sees, as he will, a certain sorcerers' device bearing down on him: but let him who is without fear in his heart give it battle, and, if God wills, he may vanquish it.'

Dorat Dilami said, 'I do not understand anything of all this—but by Heaven, there is more fear in *my* heart than you could either measure or imagine!' Mze Dchabuki said to him, 'What, Dorat Dilami, are you afraid?' And Dorat replied, 'I am indeed!' Then Mze Dchabuki laughed and said, 'By Heaven, Mosor Nadirisdze and I are not afraid!' But at that Mosor Nadirisdze said, 'Oh King, do not count on me! By Heaven, so terrified am I that I can scarcely breathe!' Then we all laughed—but none the less fear was in the hearts of all of us [retainers].

We asked the guides what manner of thing this sorcerers' device was, but they replied, 'We know nothing about it, save that whosoever has any fear in him flies before it.'

When day had broken we set out. Presently on the far horizon we saw five men mounted upon lions coming with a countless host. These [five] were the same men as had changed themselves from dragons.<sup>2</sup> When they came up we engaged them fiercely, but our strength failed in the battle, and a boundless fear seized us.

Now how can I excuse our deserting Mze Dchabuki in that battle?—Suddenly a man with a bow in his hands and mounted upon a dragon came up, shouted fiercely—his voice still rings in my ears—and loosed an arrow at us. At that one and all [in the host] charged us with much clamour. Then our guides said, 'We warned you!'—and made off quickly. And we retainers did the same, leaving Mze Dchabuki alone.

<sup>1</sup> In Armenian folk-lore peris sometimes assume the shape of birds (Abeghian, p. 104). In our story, however, the bird-form appears to be the sorcerers' usual guise. Cf. pp. 197–8.

<sup>2</sup> Reading *veshapidan* for *veshapad*.

And so the whole host of the land came up and did battle with that one man. They fought through that day, and the night following—but we knew nothing of what was happening, for during that day and night we were speeding back the way we had come. Then on the day after that our guides said, 'However things have fallen out, all must be over and done with by now: let us return.'

When we got back we found Mze Dchabuki all by himself, for he had put to flight or slaughtered the whole host. He was keeping a look-out for us, and when he saw us coming he laughed and said, 'Since you fled, dchabukis, you must in truth have harboured fear in your hearts!' But in truth it was not [? real] cowardice that had made us fly: had even those two lion-dchabukis Dorat and Mosor been vouchsafed such strength that they could do other than fear the sorcerers' arts? The truth of the matter was that we had fled because we had been bereft [? by these] of all our strength. It was indeed impossible for any mortal man, save only Mze Dchabuki, to contend [? with the sorcerers' arts], even if he harboured no [? real] fear in his heart of that Sorcerers' Road.<sup>1</sup>

(At this point Amiran Darejanisdze said to me, 'Savarsamidze, he who could go along such a road without any fear in his heart must needs have been a strong man!' And I replied, 'Strong indeed—it all passes belief!' And then Raib went on.)

Mze Dchabuki had slain that man mounted on the dragon who had put us to flight, and all of those men on lions as well. He told us that as soon as he had slaughtered them their host had fled. Our guides marvelled, sang his praises, and said, 'You have done that which is beyond the power of mortal men! Blessed is your heart—for now we know that there is no fear in it.' We halted for the day, and then on the one following continued on our way.

We journeyed on, and came presently to a castle with a beautiful garden below it in which there were well-dug water-courses. A man was letting water into these, just as we [of the human kind] do ourselves. When he saw us he made us obeisance. We asked him, 'Who are you, dressed in our fashion?' And he replied, 'My lord, I was a retainer of Abad Abashi's. When they killed him they carried off us his retainers as prisoners: but I am quite alone here, and do not know what has happened to my friends and comrades.'

We asked him whose castle this was, and who were in it at that

<sup>1</sup> This explanatory passage is extremely obscure. Possibly it should be placed in Amiran's mouth.

time. He replied, 'It belongs to some one of them,<sup>1</sup> [but I do not know which, as] I have just been brought here. Just now there is no one in it except one old woman, for all the warriors went off down that way to meet you.'

Mosor Nadirisdze asked him if there were any danger anywhere along the road: to this he replied, 'I myself of course know nothing of it, but they say that it is a very hard one.'

Then as we were about to go off he said, 'As you have come such a long way you should make a halt at this castle and take some rest: you will find all you need there for horse and man.'

We took his advice and made a halt. There was no one inside the castle, but it had fine halls. We entered a great one, richly adorned, in which we found an old woman seated. She rose and made us welcome. We sat down, and she said, 'You must be weary: have something to eat.'

Two attendants whom she had by her spread a table with every kind of delicacy. Mze Dchabuki sat down by himself and we seated ourselves somewhat apart, and we all fell to our meal. Now there were only those three others<sup>2</sup> in the hall—but suddenly two men with drawn scimitars bounded in. As he had his back to them, Mze Dchabuki could not see them—but Dorat Dilami and Mosor Nadirisdze jumped up at once, leapt upon them, and had killed them with scimitar-blows before ever they could reach Mze Dchabuki. But had Dorat and Mosor not been there that lion of lions Mze Dchabuki would have been treacherously done to death.

No sooner had Dorat and Mosor killed those men than the woman, in a rage, rose and gave a shout. At once we had warriors pouring in on us through three different doors. Mze Dchabuki took up his stand at one door, Dorat Dilami his at another, and Mosor Nadirisdze his at the third. There was a great battle—by your head, it lasted from morning through until the evening! All the time the woman kept on shouting, and the warriors pouring in. At length Dorat Dilami flung himself upon the woman and killed her—and as soon as she was dead the warriors vanished from our ken.

Mze Dchabuki thanked Dorat Dilami, saying, 'Brother, blessings on you for delivering us from that woman!' After that we could not find a single soul in the castle, not even him who had claimed to have

<sup>1</sup> The reference is presumably to the sorcerers after whom the land is named.

<sup>2</sup> Sc. the woman and her attendants.

been a retainer of Abad Abashi's. The guides said, 'Had you not killed that woman, we could not have fought ourselves through to safety in a whole year!'

We spent [what remained of] the day there, and went on on the following morning. The guides told us that now as we got deeper into the Land of the Sorcerers we must be yet more on our guard. We journeyed on for a long time, and at length came to a fine house. We went inside: no one was there, but a meal with all kinds of dishes was spread. Mze Dchabuki said, however, 'I can tell you that I am not going to touch this food, for it must be work of sorcery.'

Suddenly those birds that had bathed in the lake as men and then turned into birds flew up, came in through the windows, turned into men, and sat down. They probably meant to kill us, but we did not guess this. Had we slaughtered them when they first came in, though, much trouble would have been saved!<sup>1</sup>—We said nothing to them, nor did they speak to us. Some time passed,<sup>2</sup> while we wondered at them. At last they said to us, 'Why are you not eating?—Well, if you are not going to, we will!' Mze Dchabuki replied, 'We do not want to eat, but you can do so.' Thus we refused to have anything.

They sat down, ate, and laughed—much did we wonder at them! Then a man came in and said to us, 'It was for you that this meal was prepared! Why have you let those demons eat it?' Then those who were eating the meal began to abuse him. He replied in kind—and then those who had sat down flung themselves upon him and killed him.<sup>3</sup>

We were grieved that they should have killed him on our account, and flung ourselves upon them. At that they suddenly sprouted wings, and by striking our faces with them straight away bereft us of our senses. Then in an instant we were carried right back to Khazaria, to the very gates of the capital. We were grieved at this, and Dorat Dilami said, 'God in Heaven—I think we must have been dreaming! How else could this have come about?'

Presently Abram came up and said, 'Did I not tell you that you could not win through?'—Much galled was Mze Dchabuki by this! Then Abram asked how far we had got, and we told him everything. Then he said, 'So—you got past all the perils only to make

<sup>1</sup> Literally, 'we should have remained in peace'.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, 'They stayed for some time'. <sup>3</sup> This incident is left unexplained.

a blunder! Had you killed those birds, all would have been well.' Then Mze Dchabuki said, 'Let me tell you that I am certainly going to set out once more!' And Mosor Nadirisdze agreed, saying, 'I should not<sup>1</sup> myself have ventured to urge you to—but we certainly ought to do so. It was no craven fear of battle that undid us, only devilry.' Abram tried to dissuade us, but we paid him no heed. To be short—we set out and in time once more reached the house from which we had been carried back. We found not a soul there, but suddenly those same birds appeared—and Dorat Dilami said, 'Look—there they are!' But when they had come up close to us they fell to the ground and expired.

We were amazed, and said, 'Let us leave them alone—God knows, it is sure to be some piece of devilry!' But then Dorat Dilami rose and said that he was going to examine them. Mosor Nadirisdze warned him not to touch them with his hands, and so the two of them went forward and prodded the birds with spears—whereupon flames burst out [from the bodies] and burned up the shafts. Such was the treachery of those sorcerers that had we touched [their bodies] with our hands we should have been burnt to cinders! But God delivered us from their sorcery. The guides said, 'By Heaven, we have been saved from a great disaster!—But now you have nothing more to fear from those birds.'

We went on, and presently we came to a burial-ground: there all the corpses of the earth sat up and beckoned to us, saying, 'Come over to us—what brings you here?' We neither looked at them nor gave them any answer, but it was horrible enough! Mze Dchabuki said, 'Are we to be frightened by these sorcerers?—For it is all just so much sorcery!' And then the corpses went on, 'When you have gone on a little farther you will have to resort to guile.'<sup>2</sup> But still we would neither<sup>3</sup> look at them nor give them any answer.

We went on a little way down the road, which ran through rocks. Presently we saw a huge dragon standing there upon the road. It was unlike any other, and with its gaping jaws belching flame was fearful indeed.—By your head, had you seen it you would have been amazed! Never can there have been a creature so huge.

Mosor Nadirisdze asked the guides whether there was any other road, but they replied, 'It will be just the same, whichever way we go.' Then Mze Dchabuki said, 'Do not be afraid! By

<sup>1</sup> The negative is missing from the text.

<sup>2</sup> Reading *orpirianad* for *or pirve*.

<sup>3</sup> Reading *ar* for *ra*.

Heaven, I am going to clear the road for you here and now!' And with that he put on his armour, took his long-sword, and advanced on the dragon.

Here is Mze Dchabuki's battle with the fearful dragon  
in the Land of the Sorcerers

Just then a host saw us, and, uttering fierce cries, they came swarming into the valley and quickly filled it. Some loosed arrows at us, and others stones, while yet others hurled spears.—By Your Majesty's head, a dreadful day was that for mortal men [to endure]!

Mze Dchabuki said to us, 'Now you keep the host in play until I have finished with the dragon—or, if you like, you can attack the dragon and I shall do battle with the host. Since they are loosing all these arrows and stones and spears at us, it might be better for me to attack the host. You need have no fear of the flame [the dragon is belching]—it is all just so much sorcery.'

Dorat and Mosor replied, 'You make for the dragon, and we will do battle with the host.' And so fiercely did they turn upon the host, so fiercely did they fight, that they were terrible indeed—they could not have been more so!

Mze Dchabuki made for the dragon: when it came forward to meet him he struck it on the face with his long-sword, but it seized hold of the weapon. Then the horse fell across the dragon, and the dragon killed it. Then Mze Dchabuki struck the dragon a blow with his scimitar that went deep. After that the dragon fled, but he overtook it, struck it on the back with a second scimitar, cleft it through, and killed it stone-dead. Then he turned to give us help, coming on foot, panther-like.

Just then two winged men appeared on horseback: one made for Dorat Dilami and lifted him out of his saddle. Mze Dchabuki, however, came up in time and killed this flying man.<sup>1</sup>

After that the other came at Mze Dchabuki, but before Mze Dchabuki could strike him with his scimitar Mosor Nadirisdze saw what the man was about, charged fiercely, and killed him. Then the host fled. The guides sang [Mze Dchabuki's] praises, and said,

<sup>1</sup> The established meaning of *p'rinveli* is 'bird'; but as etymologically it should simply signify 'flyer', its use here may perhaps be considered legitimate. The episode reads like a confused echo of Sepedavle's encounter with winged men. See p. 147.

'There is no dchabuki like you upon the face of all the earth; nor is there any with retainers such as yours!'

Though a more than human strength [such as they did not command] must have been needed to kill that dragon, Mosor and Dorat Dilami had borne themselves like very lions: but for them, indeed, the battle would have gone ill for Mze Dchabuki. Although he excelled them, he had been greatly helped by them.

We halted there, and then the guides said, 'You gave us your word that you would not force us to go any farther than we ourselves might choose to. Now we are approaching the place where the king's daughter is, and tomorrow we shall point it out to you. But after that we shall not go any farther.' Mze Dchabuki gave them his oath that if they would do that much he would not demand any more of them.

The next morning we went on, and presently we came to a place that was strange and hard of access. Here a strange sound<sup>1</sup> was coming out from a cave at the foot of a great rock. The guides said, 'The king's daughter is in there—and now we are going no farther.' So they halted, and we went on towards the cave. As we approached our hearts quailed, but Mze Dchabuki seemed to feel small apprehension. He put on armour for foot-fighting, and then told us that we were not to come any farther.<sup>2</sup>

Here is the hard and fierce battle Mze Dchabuki had on  
breaking into the sorcerers' cave, and his carrying-off of  
the Khazar king's daughter—behold his prowess!

Mze Dchabuki went up alone to the entrance of the cave, and then warriors came out to meet him—such heroes and men of prowess as we had never seen. First<sup>3</sup> they fought there at the mouth of the cave, then Mze Dchabuki forced his way in. But after that we heard that fearful noise once more, and thought that he must be dead.

Presently a man jumped out with a head in his hands and said, 'Thus have I seen served everyone who has come here!' Then

<sup>1</sup> This reference to sounds in the cave is quite obscure, as is also a second at the beginning of the next section.

<sup>2</sup> In the text two sentences which are not consonant with the narrative follow on here. 'We went up to the entrance of the cave and halted beneath it. Some men in armour came out: Mze Dchabuki leaped upon them, and Mosor and Dorat followed him into battle.'

<sup>3</sup> The text has 'that day'—a phrase here, as frequently elsewhere, practically devoid of meaning.

he said to us, 'We put no blame upon you, and so we are not going to slaughter you.—Now be off!'

We began to weep bitterly, for we believed that Mze Dchabuki must indeed be dead.—We went off, and when we had got back to the place where he had killed the dragon we mourned him, saying, 'We warned him, but he would not heed us!—That such a dchabuki should meet his end at the hands of such evil men! Yet we have done wrong in coming away like this.'<sup>1</sup> And there we spent three days, weeping and lamenting sorely.

Suddenly we saw Mze Dchabuki coming, bringing with him the radiant daughter of the Khazar king. We sprang up and went to meet them with great rejoicing. Mze Dchabuki said, 'You are to be pitied for not having been there to watch me, for my deeds were prowess enough! By God in Heaven, inside [the cave] I had five days and nights of such fighting as I have never known in all my life! But, by Heaven, she who is my very life is sufficient reward for what I have been through.' And with that he took her in his arms and kissed her lovely face.

And now I shall explain everything to you. That head resembling Mze Dchabuki's which that man had brought out to us had been fashioned by sorcery to terrify us. Abad Abashi and our guides were all sorcerers, and knew of all [that was to happen to us], while those two [other] guides who had been taken prisoner had connived at their capture. And the man we met by the stream, the fire-belching dragon, and the birds which came—all these had been fashioned by sorcery.<sup>2</sup>

King of Kings, give ear!—Khosro the Khazar king had sworn this oath: 'Until I find a dchabuki without his like upon the earth, I will neither give my daughter in marriage nor make over my realm to any!' But now we knew that he must be satisfied that nowhere was a dchabuki like Mze Dchabuki to be found.

Rejoicing, we set out [for Khazaria], bringing with us the king's daughter. Khosro the Khazar king came out in all his splendour to meet us, sang the praises of Mze Dchabuki, and said to him, 'My son, such a one as you it is I have been seeking for a son-in-law and to be lord of the land!'

We went on, and when we came to Khazaria the king issued

<sup>1</sup> An obscure sentence. The thought seems to be, 'We ought to have satisfied ourselves as to his fate before making off'.

<sup>2</sup> An incomprehensible sentence of five words is here omitted.



commands that all, high and low, should assemble; and then he married his daughter to Mze Dchabuki, and endowed him with lordship over his realm.

Here is Mze Dchabuki's marriage to the daughter of  
Khosro the Khazar king, and the king's endowing of him  
with lordship over Khazaria

So they celebrated the wedding; and then they placed a crown of rounded jacinths on Mze Dchabuki's head, and brought out a throne of turquoise and ruby, upon which the [new] king and queen sat down. By your head, never has the eye of man seen any fairer than they! The Khazar king himself with his own hands placed a royal head-dress<sup>1</sup> beyond all price [on Mze Dchabuki's head], pronounced a blessing, made over his whole realm to him, and then said to his barons, 'Behold your lord and king!' Then they all did homage to Mze Dchabuki, called down blessings on him, and sang his praises. Thus did they endow him with the land and realm of Khazaria and its cities of measureless wealth and treasures, and set him upon the shining throne.

He became a mighty king. Mosor Nadirisdze and Dorat Dilami he kept as retainers; and he made great men of those lion-dchabukis. At length, after enjoying many years of high honour, the older<sup>2</sup> Khazar king died, and Mze Dchabuki entered into sole possession of the realm. Great pleasure and happiness were his: he hunted, feasted, and heaped gifts upon his barons. Not only was none among his subjects unruly, but he conquered many provinces beyond his own borders; for the valour and numbers of his realm's host were alike unbounded. No enemy showed himself anywhere—if there was one, he did not dare to risk battle. Many dchabukis have I seen, but never one like him! He lived many years and conquered many other realms. When the king and queen were seated upon the throne, they were more splendid than aught ever seen by the eye of man, and they were blessed with two<sup>3</sup> very fine-looking boys, who took after both of them.<sup>4</sup> As for the delights and the hunting we enjoyed in those days, there was no end to them!

<sup>1</sup> The usual meaning of *k'udi* is 'cap'. Its use here is rather unexpected.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, 'the first'.

<sup>3</sup> Subsequent references are to one only. The text is confusedly repetitive here.

<sup>4</sup> In the text this sentence comes before that which in the translation precedes it.

One day as we were returning from hunting six men in armour—fine-looking lion-dchabukis—met us at the city gates, dismounted, made obeisance [to Mze Dchabuki], and sang [his] praises. Mze Dchabuki received them graciously, and told [us] to provide them with lodging and to give them all they needed. Then we went on home and dismounted.

Many days passed, and [those six men] still remained by the king. When he took them out hunting they proved themselves skilful archers and hunters. When he returned home he had them feast with him, and gave them many presents. He took a great liking to them, made them welcome in his household, and would often praise them, declaring that they had shown themselves to be good men.

Then after many days had gone by those men sent a spokesman [to the king with this message]: 'We are wanderers, comrades brought up together. We were ill satisfied to have as lords any of those who took us into their service, and having heard of your great worship and prowess we determined to come to you: so it comes about that we have spent all this time with you. In speaking to you thus we are not seeking to test your worth. No!—In you we find a dchabuki whose like no one has ever seen: never have we even heard tell of such another! You have won our hearts—keep us in your service, and we will serve you as no man of our kin has ever served his lord! Should you ever stand in need of deeds of prowess, you can charge us with them—although, by Heaven, these men<sup>1</sup> are indeed dchabukis enough.'

Mze Dchabuki—a great king, who loved dchabukis—replied, 'I am right pleased at your coming, and I love you well for your prowess. Henceforward you will be as brothers to me, and so will I treat you: not as mere retainers.' So they became his retainers and swore fealty to him, and he gave them many presents and offices. Every day they appeared devotedly before him to give service, and the king on his side treated them very well. Good dchabukis were they: good archers, and well skilled in all the accomplishments of warriors. Useful men indeed were they, and Mze Dchabuki loved them well. He still esteemed Dorat Dilami and Mosor Nadirisdze as first among all his retainers, but he treated those six men as members of his household—so much so that, feeling sure of their loyalty, he had them sleep in his bedchamber.

<sup>1</sup> Presumably Mosor, Dorat, and the narrator himself.

One day a certain baron, old and grey,<sup>1</sup> by the name of Ali, a foster-son of the [old] Khazar king, said to Mze Dchabuki, 'As certain is it as that you see me standing here that of all men upon the face of the earth you are the most excellent: king of this whole land are you, and no enemy dare show his face to you—for there is no one upon the earth who would dare to face you alone in battle. But what I fear is that you may meet your end through treachery. Among foreign monarchs some are your enemies, and others are jealous of your good fortune. Might not you, the invincible monarch, meet your end—as though God had been stirred to wrath against us—by foul means at the hands of men sent among us by someone? And in truth I feel uneasy about those six men whom you have taken into your service. I do not say that you should dismiss them; but you ought not to have them so closely about you until you have some knowledge as to who they are.'

The king replied, 'I am grateful for your loyal concern—but such men as these could not compass my death! However, to satisfy you, I will prove their worth.' Then he summoned those six dchabukis and said to them, 'I know that deeds of prowess are your trade: now tell me whether you have had greater success in single combat or in pitched battles.' Then they told him of many fine exploits: though whether they were true or false I do not know. They ended, 'No man has ever been able to stand against us: as to our battles—well, we were bred up in Arabia!<sup>2</sup> We have been victorious in all we have been in. And while an arrow may kill from afar [as a matter of chance], in [hand-to-hand] combat [such as these battles of ours have been] what tells is true skill.'

Mze Dchabuki said to them, 'If it will not irk you, I shall send you to a place that will call for prowess.' They replied, 'We will fling your enemies at your feet—even so will we serve you.' He thanked them and went on, 'I had a vassal—a lion-dchabuki and my foster-son—but he fell out with me over some trifles and withdrew to a strong castle of which he is lord. There he still is, and although he does not do me any harm, he refuses to come to me. Whenever I go near the castle he shuts himself up in it—and it is too strong to storm. When I am here, far away, he comes out, goes

<sup>1</sup> *Mkheovani* can also mean 'alert'.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the observation on p. 40: 'As you well know, the Arabs are [the finest] dchabukis upon the face of all the earth.'

about, hunts, and has no fear of anyone. To tell you the truth, he is a mighty lion-dchabuki, and save myself—with whom he will not dare to fight—there is no one who can face him in battle. Now go, seize him, and bring him to me. But I can tell you that, even though there are six of you, he will give you a stiff battle.—The spear is what he fights with.'

The six dchabukis replied, 'Oh King, may you live for ever!—An easy task were this, for six to seize one man! If it please you, only one of us will go—let us take him in that fashion.' But to this Mze Dchabuki only replied, 'You are all to go—and do your best!' Then they asked for a guide to show them the way, and he gave them one whom he had instructed to take them to a meadow that lay behind the castle. After that he said to Ali, 'Come, and I will give you the measure of their prowess.' And taking Ali with him, he set off. I too went with him. But no one save Ali knew anything [of his plan].

When we reached the castle Mze Dchabuki muffled his face so that he should not be recognized and took a spear. Presently the guide came up with the six dchabukis, and said to them, 'Look, yonder is the man of whom my lord told you.' And at these words the six charged, spear in hand. Mze Dchabuki withdrew a little way, and at that they shouted, 'Ha! How do you think to escape from us!'

When he heard those words of theirs he turned round and said to them, 'Miserable wretches! Mze Dchabuki can only have sent you here because he desires your destruction!' With that he charged—and by your head, he unhorsed them just as easily as though they had been little boys! Then he said to them, 'Why does Mze Dchabuki not come himself to take me?—Or does he think that these lands are empty?' Cast down indeed were the six dchabukis!

Mze Dchabuki went up to Ali and said to him, 'Ali, do you believe that those men could compass my death?' But Ali replied, 'By your head, in fair fight neither these men nor any other dchabukis! What I fear is that you may meet your death through treachery!' Mze Dchabuki, however, declared, 'By Heaven, neither through prowess nor through treachery could they compass my death!' And then we went off home.

After those [six] men had returned home Mze Dchabuki continued to be free of all disquiet and to show them much

favour—for he feared nothing from them. When we went out on to the plain to hunt, wherever he might be, Mze Dchabuki would have those six dchabukis in his tent with him.

One day on our return from hunting Mze Dchabuki had a meal, and then lay down to sleep, clad only in a shirt.<sup>1</sup> Mosor Nadirisdze lay down before him, but Dorat Dilami was not then with him. Presently those six rose [from the places where they had been lying in the tent], stabbed Mosor Nadirisdze with their daggers, and killed him. Mortally wounded, Mze Dchabuki<sup>2</sup> sprang up, but they fled: and although he overtook one, seized him, dashed him to the ground, and killed him, the other five got to their horses and made off.

Mosor Nadirisdze had been killed outright, but when we came in we found Mze Dchabuki still with a little life in him.

(Here Raïb Nobati wept and smote his face with his hands. Amiran Darejanisdze, his heart heavy with grief, wept likewise; and for a long time we all did the same, grieving sorely. At length Amiran Darejanisdze said, 'Go on and finish the story.' And although he could scarcely speak for weeping, Raïb did so.)

He was still alive, and said to us, 'You see how treacherously those base men have killed me! And Mosor Nadirisdze too—his death grieves me as much as does my own!

'Now Dorat Dilami cannot avenge me single-handed: you must go and find some good dchabuki and tell him of me and of my prowess, so that he may be moved by my fate and valiance to avenge me.' Then he thus besought all the barons who were there: 'My son is only a little boy—bring him up fittingly.' And he spoke this message for Dorat Dilami: 'You are a good man and a good dchabuki: well is it that you were not here with me, or those men would have treacherously killed you too! Now I have always done well by you and seen to it that you prospered—and so I entrust my son to you. Do not desert him, but bring him up—perhaps he will turn out well.

'You, a single dchabuki, cannot avenge me alone, for they are many. But if you can find a good dchabuki anywhere, tell him all: do not leave me and Mosor Nadirisdze unavenged!' Then he wept and said, 'Death grieves me but little—it is finding it at the

<sup>1</sup> In the text *perangit*, 'in a shirt', is attached to the 'six' rising from their places; but it is clear that the word is misplaced. A subsequent account of the episode (see p. 208) has it in its proper place.

<sup>2</sup> It looks as though a few words telling of the stabbing of Mze Dchabuki have been lost from the text.

hands of such villains!' And when he had finished, those arms which had slain so many heroes lost their last strength, and he died: that lion of lions Mze Dchabuki yielded up the ghost, leaving us, his barons and retainers, with eyes full of tears.

Thus were the star whose face was radiant as the moon<sup>1</sup> and her son left to mourn with tear-filled eyes, and a great realm and countless barons to grieve.<sup>2</sup>

When he had finished we wept in great sorrow. Then presently we saw Mze Dchabuki's mother and his son approaching, clad in black and escorted by three thousand horsemen. We sent some men forward to meet them and to inquire who were in the company. And the reply came that Mze Dchabuki's mother, his son, his retainer Dorat Dilami, and all his barons were there.

Amiran Darejanisdze went forward to welcome Mze Dchabuki's mother, the queen, and greeted her and her barons. Then he picked up the little boy—who was a very beautiful child, and took after his father—in his arms. After that we turned homeward, and Darejanisdze proffered hospitality. His own hall he cleared for the queen, moving himself to another, while to each of the barons he gave separate lodging. Thus he showed the queen as much honour as he would have the mother of his own lord. And much did he love Dorat Dilami for the sake of his prowess.

[The queen and her retinue] stayed for many days. Mze Dchabuki's mother did not make her request at once, but set herself to bestow many rich gifts upon Amiran Darejanisdze, who likewise gave many presents to the queen and each of her barons.

So many days went by, and then one day the queen came to Amiran Darejanisdze, bringing with her her barons and the little boy. They sat down, and then the queen addressed him thus: 'You are a great lord and so good a dchabuki that there is none other like you upon the face of all the earth! It is true that I am unknown to you, and my son was also; but you are far from unknown [to me], such has your prowess been!—My peerless son left a charge which none but you can carry out. On his death-bed he said, "Find some good dchabuki among those there are upon the earth, and tell him of my prowess and of this treacherous killing, that he may

<sup>1</sup> Sc. Mze Dchabuki's wife.

<sup>2</sup> In the text this sentence appears after the second in Mze Dchabuki's speech.

take pity upon me and avenge me." As we have heard of your prowess and of your fame we have come to you. Now quit yourself as befits your valour. And to you do I entrust this little boy: bring him up as you think good.'

Then the queen took up the boy and placed him in [Amiran's] bosom. All this had she said with weeping. Now she rose and went away, saying, 'Dorat Dilami and the barons will tell you all the rest.' They sat down and began with the tale, which Dorat Dilami told in the same fashion as Raïb had done. While he was telling it they all wept.

When it was done Amiran Darejanisdze asked, 'What lay behind the coming of those six men, and why did they kill your lord?' And Dorat Dilami replied, 'In a battle before the gates of the capital of Khazaria, Ghamar Ghazneli under Mze Dchabuki's eyes<sup>1</sup> treacherously killed Amar Iamaneli when his helmet had slipped from his head.<sup>2</sup> Mze Dchabuki grieved much at Amar Iamaneli's death, and later when Ghamar Ghazneli fought with him, he struck him on the helmet with his scimitar, cleft him in two, and killed him. News of this reached Ghazni, and at length Ghamar's brother, Makhot Ghazneli, got together that band of six dchabukis which came before our lord with offers of service, were taken into his household, and then killed him while he slept. These were the men: Makhot Ghazneli himself, Pirusen<sup>3</sup> Bikreli, Sabur Misreli,<sup>4</sup> Ali Nabidisdze, Abir Arabieli,<sup>5</sup> and Shavi Dchabuki. Those six stabbed Mze Dchabuki while he lay asleep, clad only in his shirt. Mosor Nadirisdze too, who was lying before him, they struck with their daggers and killed. Mze Dchabuki, for all that he was wounded, sprang up, overtook Shavi Dchabuki, seized him, dashed him to the ground, and killed him—but the others managed to get away.' Thus did Dorat Dilami end the story of Mze Dchabuki; and we all wept.

Amiran Darejanisdze rose, and, taking the barons with him, went to the queen and said to her, 'Oh Queen, this promise do I give you: either I shall avenge Mze Dchabuki or I shall meet my end, even as he did. And I shall bring up this son of his as though he were my own lord's.' The queen gave him thanks and, weeping, blessed

<sup>1</sup> Literally, 'at Mze Dchabuki's side'.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 184.

<sup>3</sup> *P'irusen* (Persian *Piruzān*).

<sup>4</sup> Literally, 'Sabur the Egyptian'.

<sup>5</sup> Literally, 'Abir the Arab'.

him, sang his praises, and bestowed many gifts upon him. And after that [the queen and her retinue] went off.

When we had arranged where to meet him Dorat Dilami went off to Khazaria to make ready [for the expedition on which we had agreed]. Amiran Darejanisdze too thought it time to be up and doing, and, after invoking God's protection, we set about our preparations also.

### Here is the story of the Revenge

King of Kings, give ear: may you live for ever!—Amiran Darejanisdze sent Raïb Nobati along with an envoy whom he dispatched to Sepedavle Darispanisdze with this message: 'Question this man' and he will tell you the story of Mze Dchabuki: you will learn of his glorious prowess and how in the end he was treacherously killed by evil men—a very grievous story is it that he has to tell you! Now this dchabuki left behind him this charge: "May some good dchabuki on learning of my prowess take pity on me and avenge me." And the queen—Mze Dchabuki's mother—his son, his retainer Dorat Dilami, and all his barons came to beseech me to avenge him. They would have gone on afterwards to you too, but I would not allow that, for the queen is an old woman, and the journey would have been long and fatiguing for her. Now I may tell you that for my part I have given this promise, that either I shall avenge Mze Dchabuki or I shall be slain as he was.'

The envoys<sup>2</sup> set out for Sepedavle Darispanisdze's, and after many days they arrived there. Now Sepedavle had already heard of the exploits and great worship of Mze Dchabuki, and also of his treacherous killing. When the envoys had told him the story once more he grieved sorely, and sent them back at once to Amiran Darejanisdze with this message: 'The promise you have given is worthy of your prowess! I will come too, and we can meet at one of the cities in [the land of] Ghazni. But we must take a host with us, for [our enemies] have great and strong castles, and countless warriors.'

We joined forces<sup>3</sup> [with Dorat] at the place agreed upon, and made ready [to set out to meet Sepedavle]. Our lord had a host of twenty thousand picked warriors of Baghdad, and Dorat Dilami

<sup>1</sup> Sc. Raïb.

<sup>2</sup> Sc. Raïb and his companion on the mission, who is perhaps to be thought of as a professional courier.

<sup>3</sup> Literally, 'We assembled'.



had a Khazar host with him. We set out with our hosts and made for the place to which Sepedavle had said he would come. He himself was already there—and now we came up with forty thousand warriors. Greatly did Sepedavle rejoice at the arrival of Amiran Darejanisdze. They gave each other greeting and rejoiced at being together once again.

King of Kings, give ear!—We set off and journeyed for many days. Some spies, Dorat Dilami's men, went on ahead, scouted, and then returned and brought us this report of the people of Ghazni: '[Your enemies] have learned of your approach and have gathered together a great host: and now they are in [the city of] Ghazni.' Then Dorat Dilami told us, 'Sorozan Raseli and Ustarashan Asurastaneli, very good dchabukis and lords of great hosts, have come to their aid. However, since you<sup>1</sup> have both come, that host [in the city] should not be able to compass your<sup>2</sup> [defeat].'

We went on straight away. On our side we were: Sepedavle Darispanisdze; Amiran Darejanisdze and his retainers—I, Savarsamidze; Aban Kabanisdze; Ali Momadisdze; Asan Badridze; Qamar Qamareli; and Kowos Kosidze; together with Sepedavle's men Omar<sup>3</sup> and Qamar; and Dorat Dilami. On the other side there were Makhot Ghazneli, Sorozan Raseli, Ustarashan Asurastaneli, Pirusen Bikreli, Sabur Misreli, Abir Arabieli, [Ali] Nadibisdze, and their seven retainers, lion-dchabukis.

Here is the great battle of Amiran Darejanisdze and the  
retainers, the great fight to avenge the killing of Mze  
Dchabuki

King of Kings, give ear!—For now I am about to tell of great and fierce battles! We had eighty thousand men in our host, but [our enemies] certainly outnumbered us. During our approach Sorozan Raseli came out a ten days' march by himself to harass us and cast an eye over our host. He did us a deal of harm and slaughtered many in our army—five hundred of our men did he kill that day before he went off. The next day Ustarashan Asurastaneli came out to harass us in the same way, and did us even more harm. To be short—each of them in turn came out by himself, and each day one or other of them did great harm to our host. But they never showed their faces to us [dchabukis].

<sup>1</sup> Sc. Amiran and Sepedavle.

<sup>2</sup> Reading *t'k'veni* for *t'k'ven*. The sentence is defective.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 142, &c.

At last we got within a day's march of Ghazni: and then, on the following morning, in brave array, we went on towards the gates of the city. That day Amiran Darejanisdze and Sepedavle Darispanisdze put on their armour and told us all to do the same. We got the host ready, all formed up in mighty ranks, and Amiran and Sepedavle themselves led us forward; for we were expecting battle that very day.

We went forward and surveyed the city, while [the enemy] sounded their clarions and made ready [for battle], and then went up to the gates. A large number of their warriors came out, but none of those dchabukis did. They only sent out their host. And as the dchabukis did not come out, Amiran and Sepedavle would not take part in the battle—nor would they let us.

[Our] host shouted and advanced: then [the opposing armies] crashed together, and fought until dusk. When the coming of night separated them countless warriors had been slaughtered on both sides. By your head, the fighting had been fierce enough! But that day none of those famous dchabukis [within the city] had taken part.

We remained there before the gates of the city, plundering<sup>1</sup> and burning all [the country] round. Each day their host came out, but those dchabukis themselves did not. Many were the men slaughtered, both on their side and on ours.

Sepedavle Darispanisdze said, 'I am amazed that such good dchabukis should not have come out to do battle! What can they intend?' Amiran Darejanisdze replied, 'For the matter of that, we have not been going out to battle either. Doubtless they suppose that we mean to stay here for a long time. (And they think rightly, for we are not going away until we have either captured the city or been slain!) That is why they have not been coming out.'

Just then a very large number of warriors came out, whereupon our host went forward [to meet them], and there was fierce fighting. Then presently Dorat Dilami said, 'Do you comprehend their treachery? [The dchabukis] do not come out themselves but send forth their host to destroy ours: Now as they are in their own land they can make good their losses,<sup>2</sup> and when our host has at length been worn down those dchabukis will fall upon us and such small numbers as we still have at our backs—they mean to work

<sup>1</sup> Reading *movionarenit'* (derivable from *onavaroba*) for *moviarenit'*.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, 'they will not be weakened'.

treachery upon us, just as they did on Mze Dchabuki! But do not let us fall into their trap!

As soon as he had said this Dorat Dilami charged fiercely and, seeing that his fury could not be checked, Amiran Darejanisdze and Sepedavle Darispanisdze gave us the word, and we charged as well. So fiercely did we fight and slaughter that we brought down the wrath of God upon [the enemy], and forced them to take refuge in the city.

Dorat Dilami shouted, 'You are well seasoned in treachery, but do you not understand that you cannot undo us with it? We came here to do battle with you; so, if you are true dchabukis, come out and engage these dchabukis [of ours]! Why have you left the hosts to fight together?—By Heaven, henceforward whenever you send out your host we will treat it in the same fashion as we did just now!'

Then [the dchabukis in the city] began to abuse Dorat Dilami, and Ali Nadibisdze shouted to him, "Those dchabukis [who are with you] have naught to do with us—what concern have they in this business?—Yet you have brought them here with trickery! Now if you are anything more than a woman, come out on to the maidan tomorrow, and you and I will fight.' And so they exchanged challenges, and determined upon battle for the following day.

Here is the battle of Dorat Dilami and one of  
Mze Dchabuki's murderers

When day had broken Ali Nadibisdze came out in his armour, and the dchabukis [in the city] and all the townsfolk thronged [to watch]. Dorat Dilami went out in his armour likewise—and at that Makhot Ghazneli shouted to Ali Nadibisdze, 'Vanquish him quickly, and then come back in!'

Dorat Dilami shouted, 'May my enemy "come back in" in the same fashion as this man is going to!' Then they charged fiercely, shouted, engaged, and had a great battle. Then at length Dorat Dilami, who had all along been having the better of it, charged, saying, 'Why did you not show mercy to my lord Mze Dchabuki—to kill such a man by treachery! But now you too are going to meet your doom!'<sup>1</sup>—struck Ali on his helmet with his scimitar, cleft him to the breast, and killed him. Greatly did we rejoice, while [the enemy] were grief-stricken. Dorat Dilami went up and made

<sup>1</sup> Literally, 'And now you too will see that day [of death]'.

obeisance to Amiran and Sepedavle, and they gave him thanks, [saying], 'You have quitted yourself in such fashion as is worthy of your prowess!' And from that day forward [the dchabukis in the city] sent out their host no more.

After a time Sorozan Raseli and Ustarashan Asurastaneli sent a man to Amiran and Sepedavle with this message: 'By Heaven, this is no business either of ours or of yours—but since you have embroiled yourselves in it, and are seeking to avenge Mze Dchabuki, while we on our side have come to the aid of [Makhot and his confederates], let us tell you that it cannot be brought to an end without battle! So, if you will, come out tomorrow.'

Amiran and Sepedavle sent back this reply: 'Yes, by Heaven, we must have battle soon! It is not for dchabukis to hang back from combat!—If you want to have it, by Heaven, we are ready!'

Here is the great battle before the gates of the city of Ghazni of Amiran Darejanisdze and Sepedavle Darispanisdze and, from the other side, Sorozan Raseli and Ustarashan Asurastaneli

In the morning Sorozan Raseli and Ustarashan Asurastaneli came out in their armour, and all the townsfolk thronged [to watch]. Amiran Darejanisdze and Sepedavle Darispanisdze went out from our side, and on both sides the clarions and tabors were sounded.

They circled round each other at the gallop, charged, shouted, and fought in a fashion worthy of their prowess. From morning till dusk did their combat last: only the coming of night separated them.

Sorozan and Ustarashan went back into the city rejoicing that they had escaped defeat; but we for our part were greatly irked that they had held their own in the battle. Amiran and Sepedavle said, 'If we cannot kill them, the murderers of Mze Dchabuki will not come out.—And what are Sorozan and Ustarashan guilty of? They have done no more than ally themselves [with the murderers].'

The next morning the seven retainers<sup>1</sup> [of the dchabukis in the city] came out and challenged us [retainers]. Out we went in our turn—I, Savarsamidze; Aban Kabanisdze; Ali Momadisdze; Asan Badridze; Qamar Qamareli; Kowos Kosidze; and Omar,

<sup>1</sup> See p. 210.

Sepedavle's retainer. We engaged and had a great battle, but in the end they fled, being unable to stand against us any longer. We overtook them at the city gates, and slew four. The others were saved from us by the host, which had come out to bear aid. Then we withdrew in triumph, and Amiran and Sepedavle gave us thanks.

After that we had no more fighting for many days, but at length Sorozan and Ustarashan sent the same man as before to us with this message: 'We must not delay any longer in joining battle once again—we shall come out tomorrow. The other day we failed to get a decision: come out, and let us fight until we do!—Have your host fall back a good way, so that they cannot come to your aid: we on our side will have the gates of the city closed so that if you get the upper hand of us no one can come out to ours.' And they determined upon battle for the following day.

Dorat Dilami said, 'I am sure that their saying, "Have your host fall back a good way" means that they are planning treachery.' But Sepedavle replied, 'By my life, Dorat Dilami, have no fears! For now you are going to behold my prowess!'

Here is the second battle Amiran Darejanisdze and Sepedavle had—a great battle with Sorozan Raseli and Ustarashan: and the second piece of treachery<sup>1</sup> wrought by those inside the city

When day had broken Sorozan Raseli and Ustarashan Asurastaneli came out—and, by your head, they would have delighted you, for they were men indeed! Then after that the clarioneers and taborers came forward and placed themselves before our host.

Amiran Darejanisdze and Sepedavle Darispanisdze went out in their armour—and had you seen them you would have said, 'No such dchabukis have ever been born!' Dorat Dilami said, 'By Heaven, ours look the better—but God dispenses victory as He chooses!'

The clarioneers and taborers on our side sounded their music, and then the dchabukis Sorozan and Ustarashan sent over some men with this message: 'We will not come forward to do battle until you have made your host fall back.' And thereupon Amiran and Sepedavle told us to withdraw to some distance.

Now behold the prowess of Amiran and Sepedavle in that hour!

<sup>1</sup> The first being the killing of Mze Dchabuki.

—They circled round each other at the gallop, charged, shouted, and engaged. A great battle followed—and now behold the treachery [of the dchabukis in the city]! For suddenly in the midst of the battle the gates of the city were opened, and without any warning out came Mze Dchabuki's murderers, Makhot Ghazneli, Sabur Misreli, Pirusen Bikreli, and Abir Arabieli! And so there were now six dchabukis [against two]. Three bore down upon Amiran Darejanisdze and three upon Sepedavle.

Amiran Darejanisdze said, 'By Heaven, the very men we have been waiting for have come out!' Sepedavle Darispanisdze replied, 'By Heaven, let them come out! The sooner we kill them' [?] all the better!'—And with that they charged fiercely.

Dorat Dilami said to us, 'I told you they were planning treachery!' We hastened off to the aid of Amiran and Sepedavle—but by Your Majesty's head, before we could reach those two, Amiran and Sepedavle, they had killed the six—so fiercely had they struck them that they had cleft them each through with a single blow.

Presently our host came up—and as soon as the townsfolk saw them coming they fled. We shattered the gates of the city, went inside, took possession of it with slaughter, and brought down the wrath of God upon it, sparing neither woman nor man. In vengeance for Mze Dchabuki we laid that city in ruins, and burned it. Then we loaded all its rich treasures—jewels, pearls, and gold brocades beyond counting—upon great trains of camels and mules, and, taking these with us, went off, triumphant and rejoicing. Such was the avenging of Mze Dchabuki by Amiran Darejanisdze and Sepedavle Darispanisdze.

They sent the good news to the queen, Mze Dchabuki's mother; and she rejoiced, sang their praises, and uttered words of boundless gratitude.

Dorat Dilami came and made obeisance to them:<sup>2</sup> they bestowed many gifts upon him, and then he went off to Khazaria.

We set out, and arrived in Baghdad in great triumph. For a whole year my lord would not let Sepedavle Darispanisdze go, and they spent every day in feasting and diversion. No end was there to the hunting and other delights! No one has ever seen such

<sup>1</sup> Reading *davkhoč'* for *daghkhoč'*.

<sup>2</sup> This sentence, although not obviously defective, is obscure. Perhaps we are to understand that Dorat had taken the news to the queen, and then returned for a formal leave-taking.

friends [as those two], nor has God<sup>1</sup> ever created any two like them in prowess or in worship!—And so they amused themselves with such gaieties as they chose.

Although he was pressed to do so by Amiran Darejanisdze, Sepedavle would not stay beyond a year. However, he invited us to Darispanshaar, and we went and stayed there for as long. No bounds were there to the honour shown us, or to the giving of presents, or to the diversion—such friends were Amiran and Sepedavle! Then when that year had ended we left Darispanshaar, enriched with great gifts, and went back to Baghdad.

Here ends the chapter of the story of the Revenge; yet may Your Majesty's reign know no end, may it last for ever!

<sup>1</sup> Reading *gmert'sa* for *gmert'isa*.

## THE TWELFTH CHAPTER

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### *The Story of Amiran Darejanisdze's journey to the land of Balkh; and of Balkham Qamisdze*

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King of Kings, give ear: may you live for ever! May God prosper your friends and bring confusion upon those who are false to you!—One day Amiran Darejanisdze told us that we were going for a stroll, and we went out on to the plain. While we were outside the city a courier clad in a black cloak came up, made obeisance to Amiran Darejanisdze, and gave him a brief missive. [When Amiran had read this] he asked the courier, 'What more can you tell me?'<sup>1</sup> But in reply the courier asked to be questioned with no one by: and so I withdrew, and they spoke together for a long time. At length Amiran told me to come up, and when I went he asked me, 'What have you made of this man? What do you take him to be, and from whence?' I replied, 'By your head, I do not know.' And then he told me, 'He comes from the widow of the King of Balkh.—The King of Balkh has been killed by one Balkham Qamisdze, who has since made himself master of the whole realm, save for a single city which the queen still holds. The queen has a daughter, and her Balkham demands to wife. He has that city surrounded, and presses so hard upon it that he must soon capture it. Now I have received this summons: "Amiran Darejanisdze!—If you are in truth such a dchabuki as they praise you for, come, wed my daughter, and deliver the land of Balkh from its enemies while yet this city with its treasures is in my hands—for if you do not come speedily to our aid they will assuredly capture it."'

Ill pleased was I at this, for that road was a very hard one—and this Balkham Qamisdze, moreover, was a man to dread, being a lion-dchabuki of many triumphs. However, as there was no hope of dissuading my lord, I merely said, 'You must do as you will in

<sup>1</sup> Literally, 'What do you know?'



this matter.' And he replied, 'I have made up my mind: we are going!'

The courier said, 'Unless you make great haste you will not be in time, for they will assuredly have taken the city. Balkham Qamisdze himself is not there just now, but his host is, and if he gets there before you he will capture it.'

We went home and talked the business over. Amiran Darejanisdze said, 'To go either without any followers at all or on the other hand with a whole host would be a mistake.'<sup>1</sup> But the courier said, 'I can tell you that his host is countless: you must take sufficient men with you.' And then Amiran picked out from his host five hundred warriors who were excelled by none in the realm of Baghdad.

We set out with the courier as guide—Amiran Darejanisdze himself; I, Savarsamidze; Aban [Kabanisdze]; Ali Momadisdze; Asan Badridze; Qamar Qamareli; Kowos Kosidze; and those five hundred warriors.—Had you seen us you would have said, 'There can be no men like these upon the earth!' Amiran told the courier to lead the way, and we moved off. The courier said, 'By God in Heaven, were you not so few there would be no men like you upon the face of all the earth!' But to this Amiran only replied, 'Do not worry yourself with such thoughts—lead on!'

We did the journey, and at length came to the land of Balkh. Halting on a very high hill-top [near the city], we looked down. Very large did the besieging host seem, but the courier assured us that Balkham Qamisdze was not yet there. Amazed were we that, even before the arrival of the reinforcements he would surely have at his back when he came, it was so huge!<sup>2</sup>

Amiran Darejanisdze said, 'We must design our attack.'<sup>3</sup> Then he went apart with us his six retainers and said, 'Each of you must give his counsel, so that we can decide what is the best plan.'

Aban Kabanisdze said, 'That is a large host, and we cannot meet it in pitched battle: let us rather fix on some place to put our own force in<sup>4</sup> [for an ambush]. Then some few of us can go forward and draw their host up to it, so that we shall have them on the hip. Then after that it must be as God decrees for us.' Then Ali

<sup>1</sup> Literally, 'Neither without a host is it good, nor with a host'.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, 'Amazed were we that, even without its chief, it was so huge!'

<sup>3</sup> Brosset (col. 14) draws attention to the close resemblance between this council of war and that in R 1368 seq. It seems highly probable that Rust'aveli drew upon this passage.

<sup>4</sup> Literally, 'to put ourselves in'.

Momadisdze said, 'It would not be to our advantage to draw forward such a huge host. Let us rather go and take them in the flank in the morning. Those who must die can die, and those of us who are left can fight on.' Then Asan Badridze said, 'This is my plan: let us fall on them after they have eaten and gone to rest—for they will certainly be fearing nothing from anyone. And after that it must be as God decrees for us.' Then Qamar Qamareli said, 'Give me two hundred men and stay here yourselves. I shall go forward and engage them until I have drawn the whole of their host out. Then, when I have done so and the camp is deserted, you can do as you think best.—They may manage to kill me, but if I win through I shall get into [the city] under cover of night.' Then Kowos Kosidze said, 'Their horsemen would not oblige us by coming out in numbers larger than Qamar Qamareli had himself: the rest of them would simply take [the remainder of] our men prisoner.—This is my plan: let our lord and us his retainers go and attack them by night. By Heaven, none that we meet with should get away with their lives! Then after that we can enter [the city] without trouble. If we adopted Qamar's plan,<sup>1</sup> they would certainly succeed in killing some of his men with that great host of theirs, and in unhorsing others—and then we could not stand by and leave them without help. [And so the whole plan would fall to pieces.]—We should do best if we adopted my plan to leave the whole of our host here and make the attack by ourselves: for there are none among them who could stand against us, and we can do as we choose with them. And when all is over we can enter the city without trouble.'

Then I, Savarsamidze, said, 'Brothers, why tease your minds thus? Our lord will do as he thinks best.' And Amiran Darejanisdze pronounced, 'You have all spoken as befits your prowess—but, since I myself am here, there can be no thought of carrying out any of those schemes! However huge their host may be, we cannot avoid battle. We will attack in the day-time and engage their host where it is thickest.' We agreed to this plan, and Amiran told the courier to go and announce our coming [in the city].

Here is Amiran Darejanisdze's battle with the host besieging the city, his victory over it, and his entering of the city unscathed<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Literally, 'Otherwise'.

<sup>2</sup> In the text this heading reads, 'Here is the coming of Amiran Darejanisdze

The courier went off, and we made ready. When day had broken we mounted our best horses and put on our armour: had you seen us then, by Your Majesty's head, you would have said, 'Nowhere can there be men who could face these!'

As we came up on the rear of the [besieging] host the queen was told of our coming, and within the city there was a great bustle. They brought forward clarioneers and taborers on to [the rampart], hung out banners of many colours, and set the bells ringing. At that the host outside realized that help was coming to those in the city, and they all made haste to get ready, and stood to arms.

We went forward and engaged them where they were thickest—and by Your Majesty's head, never in all my days have I seen such a fierce battle! The whole host bore down on us and engulfed us with their numbers. When we had cut our way out from among them we found that Amiran Darejanisdze was no longer with us—but then presently we saw him again, alone among the host. He was fighting fiercely, and had killed many horses and men. Many, however, were still attacking him; from behind, from in front, from this side, and from that. They had killed his horse, and his scimitar had broken, but he had torn off legs from [the carcasses of] horses, and was laying about him with these, slaughtering the host!<sup>1</sup>

As soon as we saw him we shouted: he came towards us, and we six gathered round him. Then the whole host came upon us—and by God in Heaven, never have a handful of men been seen to fight as fiercely as we did then! We all had our horses slaughtered, but we fought on until the evening on foot. No weakening did we see in Darejanisdze; rather did he fight ever more fiercely. And all the while the queen, the widow of the King of Balkh, her daughter, and the whole host watched us.

So much injury did we do the besieging host that they did not pursue us after we had cut our way through them and begun to make for the city,<sup>2</sup> and so we entered the city unscathed. The queen, the widow of the Balkh king, came out with all the townsfolk to meet us. In this wise did Amiran Darejanisdze appear to his future wife at their first meeting. We went into the royal palace and spent the remainder of the day there—countless were the

into the land of Balkh, his battle with the host . . .'. Doubtless a scribal confusion with the title of the story.

<sup>1</sup> Two and a half confusedly repetitive lines in the text are here omitted.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, 'passed over to the far edge [of the host]'.

ceremonies of state, the stores of treasure, and other fine things in that palace!

Of our five hundred men only three hundred remained to us, and all the horses with our host had been slaughtered. In the evening, however, a baron came and asked for our master of horse. Kowos Kosidze rose and followed him. After seeing some horses he came back and told us, 'They have shown me three lean nags that would be of no use for anything!' We were troubled at this—but then Amiran Darejanisdze said to Kowos, 'Now, tell me the truth!' And Kowos told him, 'By Your Majesty's head, they have shown me five hundred steeds whose like has never been seen, and for you there are three horses whose like are not upon the earth!'

The queen sent the same baron again, with this message: 'Henceforward you are king of the whole land of Balkh!—I had indeed heard you praised, but what I have now seen you do goes beyond all that was said. Now take my radiant daughter to wife, and place the crown upon your own head: perhaps God will grant you both a son and victory over those men [who have made revolt against me]. Join together our just cause and your own prowess, and God will give you strength!' And Amiran sent back a reply that accorded with her wishes.

The queen had all assemble, and they celebrated the wedding. Never have a bridegroom and a bride like this king and queen<sup>1</sup> been seen! The whole land of Balkh had been clad in mourning for the [late] king, but now the queen commanded that all should discard it. Her own daughter, however, Darejanisdze's wife, would not do so: she said, 'I shall know for myself when the time comes!'

That night the queen sent a man to our lord with this message: 'If it please you, summon the barons and the great merchants of the city, and hold a feast tomorrow.' To this he sent the reply: 'That were very well—if it please you, let it indeed be done.'

In the morning they spread a feast in one of the royal apartments of the great palace, and brought two thrones for the queens and one for Amiran Darejanisdze. Amiran placed his wife at his side, the queen seated herself, and they placed the barons round about them. Never has such feasting been seen as they held then! We drank sweet<sup>2</sup> ruby-coloured wine and took our ease. Then presently

<sup>1</sup> With this and one other exception noted below, 'the queen' throughout this story denotes the widow of the late king.

<sup>2</sup> *Khosh-guruli*: from Persian *khosh-govār*, 'sweet-tasting'.

Amiran Darejanisdze said, 'Do not break up the feast—go on enjoying yourselves here. For today the battle is mine!'

He called for a horse, put on his armour, went out and engaged in battle, while we all watched. Even as befitted his prowess, he slaughtered many men and horses: and then, after he had killed five hundred men with his own unaided hand, he came in unscathed and sat down once more at the feast. The queen and all the barons sang his praises and presented him with great gifts.

At the same feast Amiran Darejanisdze filled a goblet, gave it to me, Savarsamidze, and said, 'Drink off this sweet wine, for tomorrow the battle will be yours!' I rose, made obeisance, took the goblet and drank. And then the feasting came to an end for that day.

The next day Amiran seated himself upon the same rampart as before,<sup>1</sup> and placed the barons round about him. After the drinking and feasting had gone on for some time I rose, put on my armour and went out. By your head, right well did I quit myself! That day I killed three hundred men—do not think that I am idly bragging! When I returned to the feast Amiran Darejanisdze gave me thanks and bestowed great gifts upon me.

At the same feast he said to Aban Kabanisdze, 'Tomorrow the battle will be yours!'—and at that Aban rose and made obeisance. There was drinking and diversion, and then the banqueting came to an end.

The next day Amiran seated himself upon the rampart to feast once more. Aban Kabanisdze put on his armour, went out, and did well in his turn. Two hundred and forty men did he kill that day, and afterwards came back to the feast unscathed. Amiran gave him thanks, and bestowed countless gifts upon him.

After that Amiran said to Ali Momadisdze, 'Tomorrow the battle will be yours!' Ali made obeisance—and that day's feasting came soon to an end.

The next day they sat down once more to feast. Presently Ali Momadisdze put on his armour, went out, charged and engaged. Two hundred men did he kill, and afterwards came back to the banquet unscathed. Amiran gave him thanks, and bestowed great gifts upon him.

At the fourth day's feast Amiran said to Asan Badridze, 'Today

<sup>1</sup> The previous feast was in fact described as taking place in one of the apartments of the palace.

the battle will be yours!' Asan put on his armour, went out and engaged under the eyes of the king and all the barons. A hundred and sixty men did he kill, and all declared that he had quitted himself well. He came in unscathed, and Amiran gave him thanks and bestowed countless gifts upon him. Then presently Amiran said to Qamar Qamareli, 'Tomorrow the battle will be yours!'

In the morning the king took his seat and had a feast spread. Qamar Qamareli put on his armour, went out, charged fiercely, and killed many horses and men. After that he returned unscathed save for one slight wound—the first any of us had received. Amiran bestowed gifts upon him and gave him thanks.

And now Kowos Kosidze, who had not as yet had any fighting, said, 'Oh King, tell me that tomorrow the battle will be mine!' The king gave him thanks and said, 'Yes, by Heaven, yours it will be!' Thus did he give his permission.

In the morning after the king had sat down to feast Kowos Kosidze put on his armour and went out. So fiercely did he charge that everyone declared that he was the best! He came in unscathed, and Amiran gave him thanks and bestowed gifts upon him. So we all had our triumphs in battle—none could have done better! And everyone declared, 'There is no one like Amiran Darejanisdze, nor is there any who has such retainers at his back! There is no dchabuki like him upon the face of the earth!'

Now these daily victories of ours had struck terror into the besieging host, and so they sent a man to Balkham Qamisdze with an account of all that had happened, and the assurance that there was no dchabuki like Amiran.

Here is the coming of Balkham Qamisdze, and his many and tremendous battles with Amiran Darejanisdze

At length Balkham Qamisdze was seen approaching, and then the whole of the besieging host put on their armour and went out to meet him, while the clarions and tabors sounded. We mounted [the rampart] to watch. Up came Balkham Qamisdze with a countless host: so vast was it that the eye could not reach over it. As for its gear—none could have been finer. Balkham halted before the [besieging] host, and they pitched a purple tent for him.

Presently Balkham Qamisdze sent a man to Amiran Darejanisdze with this message: 'Ill does it become a good dchabuki such as you are to do what you have done! What wrong had those warriors of

mine done you that you must needs slaughter the wretches? If you really are a good dchabuki you ought to have sent a man to me with some such message as this: "I, Amiran Darejanisdze, have arrived—come and let us do battle!" How had those warriors of mine injured you?—Now, whoever you may be, by Heaven you are going to meet your death at my hands! Let there be no delay—tomorrow there must be battle between you and me!"<sup>1</sup>

Amiran Darejanisdze sent this reply: 'Since I have come here and taken the daughter of the king of Balkh to wife, I have become king of the whole land of Balkh—and now you ask me why I have slaughtered your warriors! Let me tell you that, as I was looking forward to your coming, my heart was not in the fighting: otherwise I should have slaughtered them all!—Tomorrow there must indeed be battle between you and me!' Now [when he had received this reply] Balkham Qamisdze flew into a rage, for he was a very arrogant man.

On the following day Balkham and all his host put on their armour: then they sounded the clarions and tabors and hung out many banners. Great was the bustle!—Then on our side Amiran Darejanisdze put on his armour and went out, followed by us his retainers. All the townsfolk and the queen as well mounted [the rampart] to watch us.

Amiran and Balkham circled round each other at the gallop, shouted, charged, and engaged. Never have ears heard a noise such as their scimitar-blows made—their strokes were like the thunder in the heavens! But though they fought from morning until dusk neither was able to gain a victory. After they had separated Amiran Darejanisdze came in in dudgeon because of the battle's having ended evenly instead of in victory for him. And Balkham Qamisdze too went off in dudgeon over this drawn battle.

On the following day Balkham Qamisdze again sent a man, with this message: 'Tomorrow there must be battle between you and me: and if you are in truth a good dchabuki, fight as hard as you can<sup>2</sup>—yesterday's battle was a mere game! We must have a decision!'

Amiran Darejanisdze sent back the reply: 'I have been cursing my right arm, for never before now has anyone been able to hold

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Rustam's reproaching of Suhrāb for the killing of common soldiery, and his challenging of him to single combat. *Shāhnāma* (W), ii, p. 164.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, 'do not withhold anything!'

me to a draw in battle!<sup>1</sup> You speak truly—yesterday's combat was a mere game, and a decision we must have!

The following day Balkham Qamisdze came out, armed as before, and Amiran Darejanisdze went out from our side, followed by us his six retainers. Amiran and Balkham circled round each other at the gallop, and then engaged fiercely. They fought for a long time: each shivered three scimitars on the other and killed many horses under him. At length Balkham Qamisdze drew off his horse, then charged Amiran Darejanisdze, struck his horse with his scimitar, and cut off its head. Now he thought that he had achieved victory—but Amiran leapt to his feet,<sup>2</sup> struck Balkham's horse with his scimitar, and cut off all its four legs. After that they charged each other on foot, but it was not now [such fierce fighting] as it had been when they were on horseback. Once more night overtook them, and they had to separate without having yet got a decision. Both were in dudgeon at having failed to gain a victory, and Amiran Darejanisdze cursed his right arm.

For many days they had no more fighting: then at length Balkham Qamisdze sent a man with this message: 'You and I have had but trifling encounters so far—but we have plenty of time, so with God's help I shall still make you repent of marrying my destined bride!<sup>3</sup> But now send out your six retainers: I shall send out six likewise—and they can have a fight to a finish.'

We [retainers] went out from our side, and six of his retainers came out from the other. We engaged, and fought from morning until dusk. At length we made a truly fierce onslaught, and they fled from us. We overtook them, however, unhorsed them before Balkham Qamisdze's own tent, and killed three of them. The host would then have fallen upon us, but Balkham Qamisdze was angered, and said to them, 'Hold off! Those [retainers] were useless, but these are good men, who deserve praise.'

He praised us, presented us with fine raiment, and then gave [us] this message for Amiran Darejanisdze: 'You have married my destined bride<sup>3</sup> and slaughtered my warriors! Now this will I say to you: come out tomorrow—and when you are putting on your armour, put a breastplate over the weak spots; for a decision between you and me there must be!'

<sup>1</sup> In fact, in an adventure which had presumably preceded the present one, Amiran had had many days of battle with Sepedavle before vanquishing him (see pp. 159–63). Admittedly that combat partook rather of the nature of jousting.

<sup>2</sup> Having crashed with his horse.

<sup>3</sup> Literally, 'my wife'.



We came back in and saw Amiran Darejanisdze: first he gave us thanks for fighting a battle on his account, and then we gave him Balkham Qamisdze's message. And they determined upon battle for the following day.

The third battle of Amiran and Balkham Qamisdze, and  
how it ended

Everyone declared that death was coming to either Balkham Qamisdze or to Amiran Darejanisdze.—When day had broken the besieging host began to busy itself with preparation, and when Balkham Qamisdze had his armour on he sent a man with this message: 'If you are a good dchabuki, do not weaken, but come out!'

When Amiran Darejanisdze had put on his armour and come out, he sent this message to his wife: 'Go and sit on the rampart and watch us: [he thought that] he was your bridegroom—while in very truth it is I who am now your husband! And today will decide which is to die, he or I.'

The queen came out, seated herself upon the rampart, and said to her daughter, 'My child, it is not fitting for you to wear black.' But her daughter replied, 'What I am doing is in truth most fitting.'<sup>1</sup>

She had her attendants bring out two thrones, one purple and the other black. Then she called for robes, one purple and the other black. She said, 'My blood-enemy, the murderer of my father, the ravager of my realm—he and my husband are going to fight today: this day must bring me either life or death.'

The king's daughter said again, 'If God gives the victory to Amiran Darejanisdze, I will put on purple and take my seat upon the throne covered with cloth of gold: but if, for my sins, my blood-enemy overcomes him and triumphs, I will put on this black robe, seat myself upon the black throne, and look for no more from this world—no, I would not, even were I to become queen of the whole of it.'

<sup>1</sup> This is the one scene in *Amiran-Darejaniani* in which the heroine comes fully to life and takes the centre of the stage. Its uniqueness perhaps invests it in large measure with its curiously moving quality. The effect has something in common with that of the few words uttered by Aude on learning of the death of Roland, her betrothed:

Ne place Deu ne ses seinz ne ses angles  
Après Rollant que jo vive remaine!

(*Roland*, p. 308, lines 3718-19.)

Much pleased at this,<sup>1</sup> Amiran Darejanisdze went out on to the maidan. All the townsfolk went forward [to watch], and Balkham Qamisdze came out from the other side. Amiran and Balkham shouted at each other and engaged fiercely. By your head, never have I seen either man or horse fight so! The blows that fell upon armour were like the thunder in the heavens—never has such a noise been heard by ears! Each shivered two scimitars upon the other, and then drew a third.

At length, swearing to himself yet again, 'There is some curse on my right arm and on my prowess!'—Amiran Darejanisdze drew off his horse. Balkham Qamisdze drew off his likewise, and he too bellowed out something or other—it sounded as though he were swearing at himself also. Then Amiran Darejanisdze shouted, 'Look out for yourself, Balkham Qamisdze, for the hour of your death has come!'—and charged.

When Amiran raised his scimitar to strike, Balkham Qamisdze was transfixed by fear and bereft of all power to defend himself. Amiran struck his helmet with his scimitar, cleft him to the breast, and killed him.

Then the whole city shouted aloud, acclaimed Darejanisdze, and sang his praises. And when Balkham Qamisdze's host saw that he was a corpse, they offered Amiran Darejanisdze their allegiance, and declared themselves his men.

When the queen<sup>2</sup> saw that he had won, she rose, gave thanks to God, and put on the purple robe. Great was the rejoicing on all hands!—Amiran Darejanisdze went back into the city and entered the palace. The queen came to meet him and said, 'Thanks be to God that you are now my son, for there can be no dchabuki like you anywhere!' And then she brought him a royal robe and a crown adorned with jewels and pearls, such as no man has ever seen. Amiran placed the crown upon his own head, put on the robe, and then seated himself by his wife. After that he summoned the leaders of the host outside the city and bestowed great gifts upon them. Then the whole of the host came before him: the leaders he kept by him to give service, but all the rest he dismissed to go their own ways.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> We must suppose Amiran to have been within earshot during his wife's speech, below the rampart, ready to ride out on to the maidan.

<sup>2</sup> Sc. Amiran's wife. Cf. p. 221, n. 1.

<sup>3</sup> In the text this sentence occurs after the two which in the translation

After that we secured possession of the whole of the land of Balkh, of every single city and castle. Without having sought it, we found ourselves surrounded by the great splendour and felicity befitting the majesty of the king of Balkh.

All the people of the realm of Balkh came and sang the praises of Amiran Darejanisdze. We passed our time in hunting and diversion. No enemy or ill-wisher had my lord Amiran Darejanisdze: everyone who during the rebellion had taken anything [unlawfully] made complete restitution for fear of him.—Boundless was our felicity!

Now near the city there lived a certain fearful Devi who got into the way of breaking into it night<sup>1</sup> after night<sup>1</sup> and killing countless people. But the queen gave out an order that Amiran Darejanisdze was to hear of this from no one.

Here is Amiran Darejanisdze's learning of how Ghamaz<sup>2</sup> Devi, the dragon-rider, was wont to wreak destruction in the city; and his great battle with him

One night there rose a sound of wailing in the city: when we asked what the meaning of it was they told us, 'Death: someone has died before his time—that must be the reason for it.' But we did not believe this.

The following night<sup>1</sup> there was wailing once again, and when we asked about it they told us, 'It rises every night—sometimes at dusk, sometimes at midnight.' Some such tale as this did they tell us. Kowos Kosidze said, 'It cannot be untimely death—or else why is there never such a death in the daytime?'

One morning a woman came into the city, wailing and tearing at her face as she went along. Presently she came to the king's palace—and when the queen saw this wailing woman, fear gripped her.

In a loud voice the woman cried out, 'Oh King! Learn now of what is happening, of the deaths in this city! The queen keeps it all from you and has told you nothing about it, but here in this city there is slaughter! I had a son, but last night Ghamaz Devi killed him!'—The king gave ear to this.

Incensed to see the woman speaking thus boldly, the queen gave orders for her to be driven away, but Amiran Darejanisdze had

immediately follow it, and after it comes a repetition of the statement 'we found ourselves surrounded . . .'. The whole passage is clearly corrupt.

<sup>1</sup> In the text, 'day'.

<sup>2</sup> *Gamaz*.

her brought to him, then rose and took her into another chamber. Then he asked her who this Ghamaz Devi was, and she replied, 'He is a huge Devi who rides on a dragon and carries a naked scimitar, with which he strikes dead whomsoever he meets. That blood-drinking Devi came [into the city], met with one of my sons who had stayed out late, struck him with his scimitar, and killed him. [With that same blow] he cleft through a wall three toises<sup>1</sup> high! But on many another night as well has he dealt out slaughter in this city!—And now, having told you of this, I give myself up for lost; for I know that the queen will never let me go in peace.'

Amiran Darejanisdze gave the woman thanks, but then his anger rose against the queen and the barons because they had kept all knowledge of the Devi from him. Then the queen said, 'That monster is very devilish and very powerful, and I kept all knowledge of the fearful<sup>2</sup> creature from you because you can never forgo a chance of battle! And now I implore you to put away any thought of fighting him—the battles you have already had should surely suffice for you!' Then the king declared, 'I am not going to let him escape combat! When next this Ghamaz Devi makes a night raid you must tell me.'

And now, having failed in her design of keeping the matter from him, the queen summoned three men, all as black as pitch,<sup>3</sup> and told them, 'The king commands you to go to keep watch on Ghamaz Devi, and to give warning on the night when next he comes.' Then those men mounted steeds of surpassing swiftness and went off quickly: where they were going we did not know.

Four days passed, and then on the fifth one of them came hastening up and said, 'Oh King, may you live for ever!—He is assuredly coming tonight!' Well pleased was the king.

The news ran through the city that Amiran Darejanisdze and Ghamaz Devi were going to fight. At first there was great rejoicing, but then the people began to grieve. The queen said, 'Oh King! Do not go to meet this devilish creature! Send someone rather to see how deeply he cleft that wall [that the woman spoke of].' The king replied, 'If he is indeed coming I cannot let him go

<sup>1</sup> This old French measure of approximately 6½ English feet may be taken as a rough equivalent of the Georgian *mkhari*, 'fathom'. (Derived from a primary sense of 'shoulder'. Cf. Old English *fæðm*, 'the outstretched arms'.)

<sup>2</sup> Reading *sadzneulo*, literally 'difficult', for *sagrdzneulo*, 'magical'. Devis are not, like talismans, works of sorcery.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the negro emissaries in R 1216, 1255.

without a battle. Do not grieve—when Badri Iamanisdze and Nosar Nisreli were prisoners and I went off to their rescue, did I not slaughter Devils and dragons such as these?’<sup>1</sup>

Then Kowos Kosidze went and had a look at the wall Ghamaz had cleft through: when he came back he said, ‘They told you wrongly—by Your Majesty’s head, it was *five* toises he cleft through!’ We joked over his report, but for all that we were much disquieted.

Amiran Darejanisdze put on his armour and went out to the city gate through which we expected the Devi to appear. At dusk another of the scouts came up and said, ‘He is indeed coming!’ Terrified were we, but there could be no avoiding battle.

All the townsfolk thronged to watch, and the queen and her daughter, in great grief, came as well. The moon rose, and in its light all could see.—Then in the half-light the third scout came up and said, ‘He is breathing hard behind me!’

Amiran Darejanisdze mounted his best horse, took his long-sword, and made ready for battle. Presently we saw Ghamaz Devi, that drinker of blood, coming on his dragon. Huge he was, and far different from any other creature! In his hand he had an enormous naked scimitar—by your head, he was terrifying enough!

First of all Amiran told us his six retainers to go forward and engage him. What excuse could we offer? To tell you the truth, no wish had we to do battle! So we said, ‘Give us the word when to attack!’ When he heard this Amiran laughed and said, ‘Brothers, by God in Heaven, you have no wish to join in this battle! But now behold my prowess!’ And with that he shouted fiercely and charged.

When Ghamaz Devi saw him charging, he too charged fiercely—and by Your Majesty’s head, the dragon that Devi rode was faster than any horse! It opened its mouth to swallow Amiran, but Amiran Darejanisdze thrust his long-sword into the gaping jaws and [through the dragon’s body] into the ground—and so he killed the dragon outright.

Ghamaz Devi struck at Amiran Darejanisdze with his scimitar and cut off his horse’s head—and then the scimitar went three toises into the ground! Both leapt clear [of the carcasses of their mounts], and joined battle again on foot. Then, after they had fought for a long time, Amiran Darejanisdze contrived to beat that

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 31–37.

fearful Devi with his quickness, and killed him with one mighty blow of his scimitar. Then he said, 'Well, you see, a scimitar was just what this Ghamaz Devi needed!'

King of Kings, may you live for ever!—When day had broken the people came up, and when they saw how huge were the Devi and the dragon, they marvelled, and were awestruck at what Amiran had done. They sang the praises of the king, and also of the queen, to whom they said, 'Blessed was your wisdom in choosing [for a son-in-law] a man able to deliver us from such a grievous scourge!' Throughout the whole realm of Balkh there was rejoicing, and when they learned of Amiran Darejanisdze's feat all the monarchs round about sent him gifts and prayers for his reign.—Since he excelled all other dchabukis he lived in splendour and felicity, and through his prowess he was first among great kings.

King of Kings, give ear: may you live for ever!—Lo, the twelve-chaptered story of my lord Amiran Darejanisdze, of us his retainers, and of so many other dchabukis is now brought to a close. It was your desire, Emir of Emirs, to hear their story—and now I have told all of it. Strange is it that your servant Savarsamidze should still be alive: but, as though for my sins, old age and length of days have descended upon me, and I have been bereft of that mountain-like lion my benefactor!<sup>1</sup>

Weeping, Savarsamidze made an end: and the great Indian king gave him thanks. Glad indeed was he to have heard this story! For many days, amid great delights, he kept Savarsamidze with him—loath was he to let him go. But at length he could keep him no longer.

When he took his leave, the king bestowed countless gifts upon him. So Savarsamidze went off to his own domain, and in India the Indian king lived on joyously, in the greatest splendour.

*Here ends the book of stories told by Mose Khoneli in the time of Queen Tamar: tales of heroes and warriors—mark them well, all you who can read!*

<sup>1</sup> *Gamzrdeli* is properly 'foster-father' or 'tutor'.

## NOTES

NOTE A, p. xv. K. Bapp in W. H. Roscher, *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, iii. 2, Leipzig, 1902-9, col. 3042; E. Mogk, article *Loki* in J. Hoops, *Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde*, iii, Strasbourg, 1915-16, p. 165; Olrik, *Myterne*, pp. 562, 576-7, and 591. W. Mannhardt suggested a connexion between the Vedic *Vṛta*, the Iranian *Zōhak*, the Scandinavian *Loki*, and the Caucasian *Amiran*. (*Germanische Mythen*, Berlin, 1858, pp. 84-88 n.) On the other hand, J. A. MacCulloch considered that the *Loki* myth might have originated in Scandinavia (*Eddic Mythology*, London, 1930, p. 150). J. de Vries is also sceptical of the theory of a common origin for the myth of the fettered giant, and furthermore surmises that the numerous local Caucasian legends may owe something to literary influences (*The Problem of Loki*, Helsinki, 1933, p. 266).

For manifestations of the myth in other regions, see E. Kuhn, *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, ii, p. 375; Panzer, *Beitrag zur deutschen Mythologie*, ii, Munich, 1855, pp. 55-56; W. Menzel, *Odin*, Stuttgart, 1855, pp. 80-81; J. G. von Hahn, *Albanesische Studien*, i, Jena, 1854, p. 165; Olrik, *Udspring*, pp. 91-107; K. Krohn, 'Der gefangene Unhold', *Finnisch-ugrische Forschungen*, vii, 1907, pp. 129-84.

NOTE B, p. xvi. In the texts of the popular tales as they were committed to paper in the last century the name is spelt variously *Usup'i* and *Usip'i*. In Ossetic the form is *Musyrbi*. C. Phillipp-Wolley (*Savage Svânétia*, London, 1883, ii, pp. 115-16) describes three murals in a church in the province of Svanet'i (Western Georgia), one with a 'saint' mounted on a red deer rampant; a second representing a fight between a mounted knight and the devil, with, behind the knight, 'three Red-Cross brethren in full armour, such as was worn by the Crusaders'. The third depicted the same hero as the others, with a monster at his feet. 'It was explained to us that the pictures all represented the life and history of Amuran [*sic*] or Job [...], and that the three knights were his companions in arms, of whom the principal was Osib [*sic*].'

NOTE C, p. xxv. On the evidence afforded by style, vocabulary, and morphology for dating, and the views of the scholars of the nineteenth century, on this question, see Kekelidze, p. 56. Kekelidze himself favours the late eleventh century. Bleichsteiner (pp. 12-13) is content to accept the traditional T'amaran dating. Chkhotua (p. 173) asserts that the work was written at the beginning of the eleventh (?) century: Dondua (p. 92) decides on the end of the eleventh or the beginning of the twelfth century: Karst (*Littérature*, p. 125) selects the beginning of the twelfth century. Nutsbidze (p. 26) does not seek to be more precise than 'the eleventh-twelfth centuries'.

NOTE D, p. 33. *Kaci didi* means 'a big man'. But the man in red is subsequently referred to as *man didoman kacma*, 'the Dido' (sc. a man of Didoet'i, today the name of a province on the Azerbaijan border of the

Georgian Soviet Republic), and *didot' mep'e*, 'the Dido king'—facts which suggest that we should here read *kaci dido*, 'a Dido', although, on the other hand, Amiran's action and speech would of course become more striking if we were to suppose that the man in red was of large build.

On Didoet'i and the Dido tribe, see Allen, p. 140, n. 1, and p. 171, n. 1.

NOTE E, p. 35. This episode, badly confused in the text, is clearly based on some variant of the Polyphemus legend, although many of the essentials of the story have gone. We may suppose that the incident in the previous section of the encounter with the one-eyed man, as it stands rather pointless, dimly reflects some version of the tale in which the travellers are rounded up by the cyclops and taken to his cave. In Mingrelia (in Western Georgia) a form of it has survived in which precisely this occurs (A. Dirr, *Kaukasische Märchen*, Jena, 1920, pp. 248–51). The Ossetes have a version in which the Nart hero Uryzmag kills the giant's son while in the cave (ibid., pp. 252–4; Bowra, pp. 102, 399–400). There is a general discussion of the Polyphemus legend in R. M. Dawkins, *More Greek Folktales*, Oxford, 1955, pp. 12–16, where other references will be found.

Amiran's fight with the Devi may have been modelled on that of Rustam with the White Div, which likewise takes place in a cave. Rustam too dashes his antagonist to the ground and takes a dagger to him. *Shāhnāma* (W), ii, p. 60.

NOTE F, p. 39. Literally, 'Ambri the Arab'. This story stands somewhat apart from the others inasmuch as the supernatural is altogether absent. In the two 'Ambri' ballads that Nutsbidze has included in his collection (op. cit., pp. 157–79) we find the dchabuki's deeds narrated to Amiran, as in our text. Omar, Amar/Ambri, and Abutar appear in the same relationships to each other in the ballads as in the following pages. It is much to be regretted that Nutsbidze has given us no information as to the provenance of the material on which his versions are based. All that can be said with confidence is that their tone has more in common with the minstrelsy of Western Europe than with the world of folk-tale; and that in this case the primacy would seem to lie with the literary work. The correspondences in matters of detail are too close to be explained in any other way.

NOTE G, p. 66. *Mnat'obi*—'star'—may, in accordance with common Georgian figurative practice, be applied to either sex. Thus we find *gmirt'a mnat'obi'a*, 'glorious heroes', and *mijnurni mnat'obi'a*, 'men enamoured of ladies radiantly beautiful', in R 6 and 1349. In the present story its use is somewhat unusual in that not only is the country in which 'the Stars' live known as 'the Land of the Stars', but their father is styled 'the Star king'. These names may well derive from some Persian legend. Cf. the sending by a king of an envoy to obtain three 'Star' princesses—sisters—for his sons in the *Shāhnāma* (W), i, pp. 177–84.

NOTE H, p. 91. In our text *t'ilisma* (Greek *τέλεσμα* through Persian *ṭilism*) signifies a magical device fashioned in the likeness of a man or some other creature.

'A talisman is a magic image which is supposed to have the power to



hinder people from approaching places near which it is put, and also to prevent people from finding buried treasures . . .': *Haft Paikar* (W), ii, p. 67, n. 553.

' . . . any mechanism that appears mysterious or is not understood may be called a talisman' (ibid., p. 153, n. 1490). Cf. *Shāhnāma* (W), viii, pp. 271-5 and *Iskandarnāma* (C), pp. 676-81.

NOTE I, p. 143. Kekelidze equates *mep'e čent'a* with *mep'e sint'a* (modern Georgian *čint'a*), 'the King of the Chinese'. (Cf. 'The Story of the Stars', p. 74.) The identification does not seem very convincing. Dchidchinadze's interpretation (p. 158, first and second notes), 'King of the Lazes' (*Čanet'i* is the *Lazica* of the ancient geographers), is morphologically more plausible, although in this case one would of course look rather for the spelling *čant'a*. On the other hand, it is surely excessively unlikely that our author, who traffics normally in the great names of Asia and Asia Minor, should send one of his greatest heroes off on his adventure to this remote corner, the name of which could have little evocative power even for Georgian readers. Perhaps we may suppose a corruption of *sint'a/čint'a*, the scribe being possibly unconsciously influenced by the more familiar *čani*, 'a Laz'.

## APPENDIX A

*Aznauri.* The history of this word is complicated. Originally it signified simply 'freeman', but in the early medieval period it became restricted to men of some position. The 'greater' *aznauris* in time became differentiated from the 'small'; a distinction corresponding broadly to that which in England eventually established itself between 'lord' and 'gentleman'. The Georgian term is retained in the translation on the ground that no tolerable English rendering is sufficiently comprehensive. (See Allen, pp. 225-30.)

*Dchabuki.* (From Persian *chābok*, 'agile'.) The primary meaning is 'boy', 'youth': and the word is so used at the present day. Its history, however, exemplifies the tendency for the ambit of such terms to extend to include the concept of 'warrior'. Cf. Old High German *degan* and *kneht*; Old English *thegn* and Middle English *childe*. The English 'knight', sometimes used as a translation, and analogous in derivation (Old English *cniht*, 'youth') is open to the objection that from a very early period it seems to have connoted a more or less precise social position of one kind or another. A *dchabuki*'s essential character, on the other hand, is simply that of one who has distinguished himself in single combat: like several figures in our text, he may as the leader of a robber band stand altogether outside the social and constitutional order.

The accepted English term for such a figure is of course 'hero', understood in its Homeric sense. This, however, is not a word that takes kindly to constant employment.

*Dchabukoba*, 'the qualities and conduct proper to a *dchabuki*', is rendered in the translation as 'prowess'.

*Devi.* 'Dans les contes géorgiens et mingréliens et en général dans la mythologie caucasienne, ce mot s'emploie pour désigner non pas des âmes sans corps et immortelles, mais des demi-hommes ayant peu de puissance et un cercle d'action très limité. Ils peuvent encourir la mort; un homme peut les tromper, les effrayer; ils peuvent se marier.' (A. A. Tsagareli, 'Contes mingréliens', translated by J. Mourier in his *Contes et légendes du Caucase*, Paris, 1888, pp. 45-46.)

These beings are of course the *divs* of Iranian mythology. In our text, however, they display no supernatural powers, such as that of shape-changing possessed by the White Div in the *Shāhnāma*. The basic concept seems to be that of a traditionally hostile people, of alien culture and religion.

According to Pizzi (*Storia della poesia persiana*, Turin, 1894, ii, pp. 7, 9), the *divs* of Persian folk-lore were in the first place

aboriginals who were identified with the evil spirits of primitive Iranian religion: and it was the mining activities of these communities that gave rise to legends of *div*-treasures locked away in caverns. (Cf. p. 36 in the text: also R 637; 1340-8.)

F. Justi, 'Geschichte Irans', *Grundriß der iranischen Philologie*, ii, p. 400, and *Shāhnāma* (W), ix, Index, p. 246, under *Div*, may also be consulted.

*Didebuli*. This denotes a great officer of state, such as a vizier or a chamberlain. 'Baron', the rendering adopted in the translation, is open to criticism on the ground that neither title nor seigniorship in itself sufficed to earn the appellation. (See Allen, pp. 244-5.)

*Qma*. The fundamental meaning of this word, like that of *dchabuki*, is 'boy'; 'youth': and there are a number of instances of its use in this sense in our text. Its development was, however, analogous to that of *kneht* in Old and *knecht* in Middle High German in that it came to bear connotations such as 'serf'; 'servant'. In the translation it is generally rendered 'retainer', but also on occasion 'attendant'; 'vassal', &c. (See Allen, pp. 231-5, 250-4.)

## APPENDIX B

The lines translated below (from Dchidchinadze, pp. 315-17) are drawn from the opening of one of the versions of the tale referred to in the Introduction, pp. xvii-xviii. The narrative as it stands is partly in prose, partly in the usual ballad-form of the cycle: octosyllabics lacking any very clearly defined metre, with a single rough rhyme or assonance running through on the last few syllables, *abcdbbeb* . . .

They went out hunting,  
Amiran and his brothers:  
Over nine mountains  
And a tenth, *Algeti* [*Alget'i*].  
On a plain they found the tracks  
Of the Devil's cloven hooves.  
On a mountain a deer bounded forth before them  
That was golden of horn.  
On a strange mountain they saw a tower  
That was built of crystal.  
They went all round it  
But could find no door.  
Where a shaft of sunlight fell upon the tower  
Amiran struck with his knee,  
And there the tower of itself made an opening,  
And there the door of itself moved onto its hinge.  
Inside lay [the body of] a lion[-*dchabuki*]—  
None could have lifted him [so huge was he]!  
At his head a steed was tethered  
That pawed the ground:  
At his left side stood his spear  
Piercing the sky with its point:  
At his right side lay his scimitar,  
Keen of edge.  
In a corner lay heaped-up gold and silver—  
A hoard of *Tsamtsumi's* [*Camcumi*: sc. the dead *dchabuki*].  
By his side sat his mother  
Weeping over her son:  
At his head sat a woman [his wife]  
Whose tears flowed to join the sea.  
Between his fingers  
He had a paper with his testament.  
This they read: it said,  
'I am Usib's sister's son:

While I lived I wrought destruction on my enemies  
And swallowed insolence from no man.—  
Now that I am dead one grudge stays yet with me,  
Against a Devi, against Baqbaq.  
Whosoever will kill Baqbaq,  
May my spear give him good service . . .’

## APPENDIX C

It has sometimes been asserted (e.g. by Kekelidze, pp. 56-61, and Blake, p. 32) that the influence of *Amiran-Darejaniani* on the style of two of the earliest components of the Georgian Chronicle—'The Chronicle of the Kings', an account of the legendary deeds of the early monarchs composed by Leonti Mroveli, and 'The Chronicle of Vakhtang Gurgaslani', by Juansheri—was considerable. (Baramidze, pp. 136-7; where it is argued that the narrative of Vakhtang's exploits was in fact written by Mroveli.) Kekelidze in the pages referred to above makes an exhaustive study of the resemblances in language and incident. These resemblances are indeed striking, but the theory obviously requires a dating for *Amiran-Darejaniani* distinctly earlier than that accorded by most critics. (See *note C*, p. 232.) Whatever the temporal relation of the two works, however, the formulas and turns of phrase in which similarity is manifest are so redolent of the technique of oral narrative that it would seem more natural to suppose with Baramidze (p. 139) that they are derived from a common indebtedness to popular tradition rather than that one writer exerted influence over the other. Some of the correspondences find illustration in the extracts given below.

Aderki, soon to be the ninth king of Iberia (Eastern Georgia) in succession to Parnavazi, founder of the realm in the third century B.C., invades the land, which is under the rule of his uncle, Arshak:

Arshak challenged Aderki to single combat: Aderki rejoiced, put on fine armour, mounted his steed, and told his army to guard his rear and fear nothing. Arshak did likewise: he put on his armour and came out from the ranks.

They shouted fiercely, charged, and struck each other with their spears: but neither could pierce the other's armour. After the battle had gone on for some time they both shivered their spears, and then they drew out their battle-picks [*čuglugi*] and began to fight with these. When they brought down their picks upon each other's armour it was like the noise of the smith's hammer when he strikes upon the anvil, and their shouting was like thunder. But still neither could overcome the other, and at length they grew weary and separated. When night fell they both went to rest. When they came out again in the morning they had bows with them. They shot at each other as they galloped, and Aderki struck Arshak in the breast with an arrow. Arshak's armour was not strong enough to protect him, the arrow passed out through his back, and he fell from his horse.

(*Chronicle*, p. 34)

Vakhtang Gurgasiani, a monarch of the fifth century A.D. round whom a cycle of romance gathered, is represented as embarking with the Persian king on campaigns in India and Sind. Single combat is agreed upon between Vakhtang and the Sindian king:

Then the Sindian king came out, and Vakhtang said to his followers, 'Pray to God and guard my rear.' Then he went out as well. Both were armed with spears, and they began to circle round each other at the gallop, each seeking the chance to make a thrust with his spear-point. The Sindian king waited until Vakhtang had made his lunge with his spear, and then charged to make a thrust in his turn. Vakhtang coolly and skilfully evaded the spear by bending low, then galloped round the Sindian king like a whirlwind and thrust his spear into his left shoulder. The Sindian king's armour was not strong enough to protect him, and he fell from his horse with a wound a cubit deep. Vakhtang [having dismounted] went up to him, seized hold of one of his feet, and dragged him before the Persian king. Then the whole army sang Vakhtang's praises loudly, and the Persian king and all his camp were filled with joy. All the magnates came to King Vakhtang with gifts and bestowed them upon him. Then the Persian king summoned a skilful physician and charged him with the healing of the Sindian king's wounds. Now it was in his mind to take from him the whole of Sind, and indeed the Sindians were ready to accept his son in place of their own king. King Vakhtang, however, counselled the Persian king to content himself with exacting tribute and taking hostages, and to set the Sindian king free, on the ground that it would not be possible to hold Sind. The Persian king thought well of Vakhtang's advice, and set the Sindian king free, after exacting a tribute twice as great as that which he had already taken from the Hindus, and taking two of his sons as hostages. Then the Persian king bestowed the whole of this Sindian tribute upon Vakhtang. After that the Sindian king made expression of great friendship for Vakhtang: first because when he was helpless before him Vakhtang did not kill him, but brought him alive before the Persian king, and secondly because it was at Vakhtang's instance that he had been set free. And he bestowed upon Vakhtang an unparalleled quantity of gifts.

(*Chronicle*, pp. 194-5)